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ABSTRACT

The twelve issues of the newsletter of the International Task Force on Literacy, spanning the two-year period from October 1988 to October 1990 (constituting a complete set), contain articles on the following: existing and emerging literacy programs in Canada, Uganda, the United States, the Soviet Union, the Caribbean region, and Zambia; preparations for and events conducted as part of the 1990 International Literacy Year celebration; literacy learner viewpoints and comments from around the world; literacy-related organizational efforts and activities of national and international organizations; suggestions for involving learners in the literacy movement; five major objectives for International Literacy Year; needs assessment for African women; literacy and the media; the need for an international literacy center; bilingualism and biliteracy; training of volunteers and specialists; self-help and literacy; literacy and equity; and the relationship of literacy and liberation. Notices of meetings, contests, publications, and research are also included. (MSE) (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Literacy Education)

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INTERNATIONAL LITERACY YEAR

Who Are We?

The moment the United Nations declared 1990 as International Literacy Year, the international literacy movement began to consider how the Year could strengthen the movement in every corner of the world.

The U.N. plan of action is to "help Member States in all regions to eradicate illiteracy by the year 2000."

The lead U.N. agency for the Year is Unesco, which believes that "International Literacy Year (ILY) should not be a 'celebration', but a summons to action." Unesco will be encouraging action among member states and increasing public awareness and popular participation. (See page 7 for further Unesco activities.)

In this framework, the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) initiated an International Task Force on Literacy (ITFL) to facilitate the involvement of primarily non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the grassroots of the literacy movement in preparations for the Year.

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The Task Force is currently composed of international and regional NGO and cooperating bodies interested in ensuring the success of ILY 1990. The December ITFL will consider the overall composition of the Task Force (see back cover for list of participants in the last ITFL meeting.) The ITFL, we hope, will be only one of many initiatives taken internationally to organize for ILY 1990 and beyond.

The ITFL held its first meeting in Toronto in October, 1987. That meeting

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Canada Invests in Literacy

Toronto -- International Literacy Day, 1988 was an occasion for rejoicing in the Canadian literacy movement. Both federal and provincial levels of government pledged increased funding for a variety of programs and projects.

One in four Canadians is functionally illiterate. A study by the Southam newspaper group indicated that 10 per cent of Canadian adults can't understand the dosage directions on a medicine bottle; 20 per cent cannot select a fact from a simple newspaper article; 40 per cent cannot figure out the tip on a lunch bill; and 50 per cent have serious trouble using a bus schedule.

Canada's Prime Minister, Brian Mulroney announced on September 8, 1988 that the federal Government will spend $110 million dollars to combat illiteracy over the next five years. The money will support volunteer groups, promote joint initiatives with the provinces and provide for an expanded national literacy secretar-

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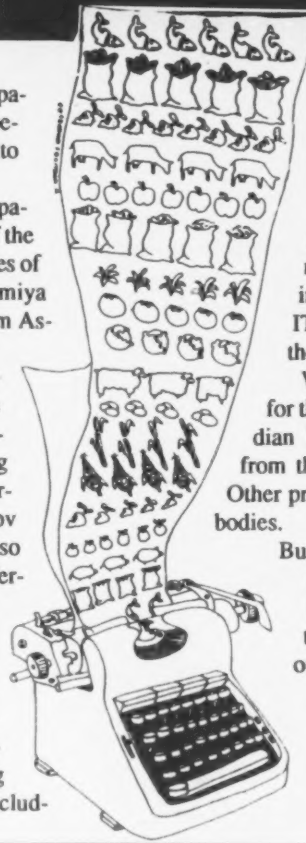
Coordination Report

by Wendy Johnston, Program Officer



Over the next three years, this column will be devoted to keeping you up-to-date on preparations for International Literacy Year and especially what the Coordinating Office here in Toronto is doing.

There are four people working here on preparations for ILY. Budd Hall, Secretary-General of the ICAE and Yusuf Kassam, Director of Programmes of the ICAE are working part-time, and Motoyo Kamiya and I are both working full-time, as ILY Program Assistant and ILY Program Officer respectively.

Working on the basis of our mandate from the last ITFL meeting, we have been taking some initiatives in the area of creating public awareness. Plans for the international telethon are being coordinated with Unesco's Office of Public Information, who have already confirmed Peter Ustinov as master of ceremonies for the event. We are also coordinating plans for an eight-city press conference in late February, 1989, to officially launch the ITFL and Unesco's efforts to build for 1990.

Yusuf, Budd and I had some very productive meetings in Paris between October 6-11, meeting with Unesco's Secretariat for International Literacy Year, the Office of Public Information, members of Unesco's NGO Standing Committee and various members of the ITFL, including Rao Chelikani of the Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Services and Sergiusz Najar of the International Union of Students.

It became clear to us that interest is growing in ILY and that the ITFL cannot afford to wait until next April for its regularly scheduled meeting. So we have invited Task Force members to meet in Paris, December 10-12, 1988. This ITFL meeting will discuss a wide variety of questions, including additions to the Task Force, a review of ITFL strategy and exciting reports on the telethon and the press conference.

We have also made some progress on core funding for the ITFL, securing $200,000 per year from the Canadian International Development Agency and $50,000 from the Swedish International Development Authority. Other proposals are currently under consideration by other bodies.

Building an international coalition of non-governmental and cooperating bodies is a challenge none of us has faced before. We have much to learn and much to gain for the literacy movement world-wide.One of our main challenges is to keep in touch, despite the geographical and sometimes technological obstacles to be overcome. So send us your news and your thoughts about International Literacy Year. You can write us, telephone us, FAX us, telex us, cable us.

Continued from page 1

Who Are We?

began to provide a forum and structure for mobilization for ILY, chart out broad strategies for ILY, find ways to support NGOs in promoting the Year and strengthen communication and cooperation among NGOs in relation to the Year.

At its second meeting in Berlin during June, 1988, this strategy was deepened and a concrete plan of action was drawn up, consisting of four elements: creating public awareness, creating and strengthening literacy structures, stimulating the "Great Debate" on literacy and encouraging literacy research and evaluation. A report on this meeting is available by writing to the ITFL Coordinating Office in Toronto.

The Berlin meeting also designated the ICAE as the Task Force's Coordinating Office, charged with monitoring and implementing the plan of action. This ILY newsletter is part of the mandate of the ITFL Coordinating Office.

The Task Force envisions and expects a year which will mark the beginning of a 10 year intensive effort to: dramatically reduce illiteracy in the world; mobilize resources from the grassroots and factory floors through governments and educational institutions; recognize that illiteracy is a problem of both industrialized and non-industrialized nations; not confuse a campaign against illiteracy with a campaign against illiterate people; link literacy to the achievements of social, economic and political democracy; strengthen the organizations of women, the poor, the jobless and the landless; result in increased empowerment of people, not increased dependency; and result most importantly in strengthened permanent structures for promoting and literacy and adult education at governmental and non-governmental levels.

Continued from page 1

Canada

iat. One of the joint federal-provincial initiatives will fund four projects involving video tapes, a computer network and the establishment of a workplace training institute in Ontario.

1990: International Literacy Year is the newsletter of the International Task Force on Literacy. The newsletter is available in English, French and Spanish free of charge by writing to the ITFL Coordinating Office, 720 Bathurst Street, Suite 500, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M5S 2R4. Telephone: (416) 588-1211. FAX: (416) 588-5725,. TELEX: 06-986766 TOR, Cable Address: INTERCAE, TORONTO.

Adult Education in Uganda

by Majanja-Zaali

> ***"The struggle to wipe out illiteracy by year 2000 continues, and we are in for it."***

Majanja-Zaali is the National Secretary of the Ugandan National Adult Education Association

The National Adult Education Association currently has 38 branches. Most of its members are women. Apart from learning how to read and write, the branches carry on other activities such as agriculture, sewing, sports (especially football and netball), handicrafts, music, drama, raising poultry and brickmaking.

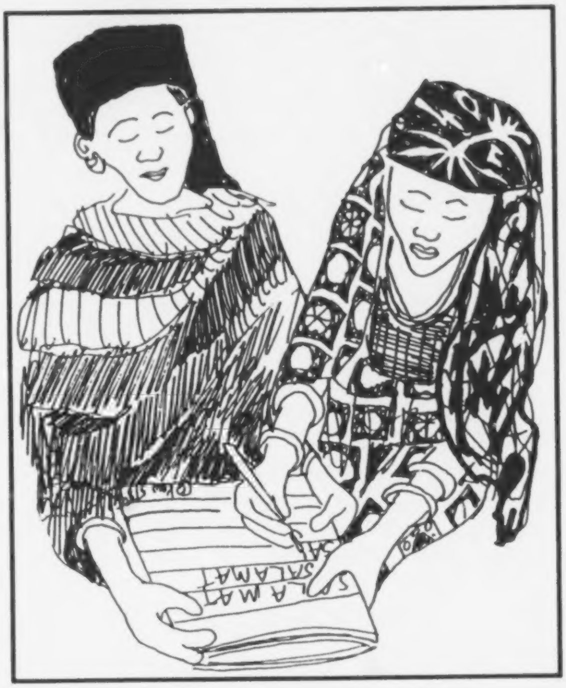
Members in all the programs exchange ideas and learn from one another. In the agriculture programs, members share the large variety of crops that they harvest. The rest are sold to generate income for their branches. This income is used to buy books and other necessary items.

These activities also help new learners exercise their newly-acquired skills of reading and writing. They try to record the type of crop grown, how much they have harvested and how much they received from sales of the produce. We encourage them to keep track of how much they spend.

The women and girls involved in the sewing classes learn to practice their writing. They have to write down measurements of the garments they are sewing, and because there are almost no pattern books available, they have to write down a description of the fashions. This motivates the learners to master reading and writing. (Sometimes it's funny when a member tries to read back what she herself has written, and can't believe that she was the one who wrote it originally!)

Football and netball are good recreational activities. The young people and school drop-outs who play these games are very proud when their team wins.

Music and drama are not only forms of recreation, but also good tools for adult education. Some of the branches have produced short plays depicting the effects of illiteracy, malnutrition, laziness and bad attitudes towards work, lack of sanitation and other themes. While the spectators enjoy the play, they also learn something very vital for improving their own lives. Music and drama help create awareness among the people.

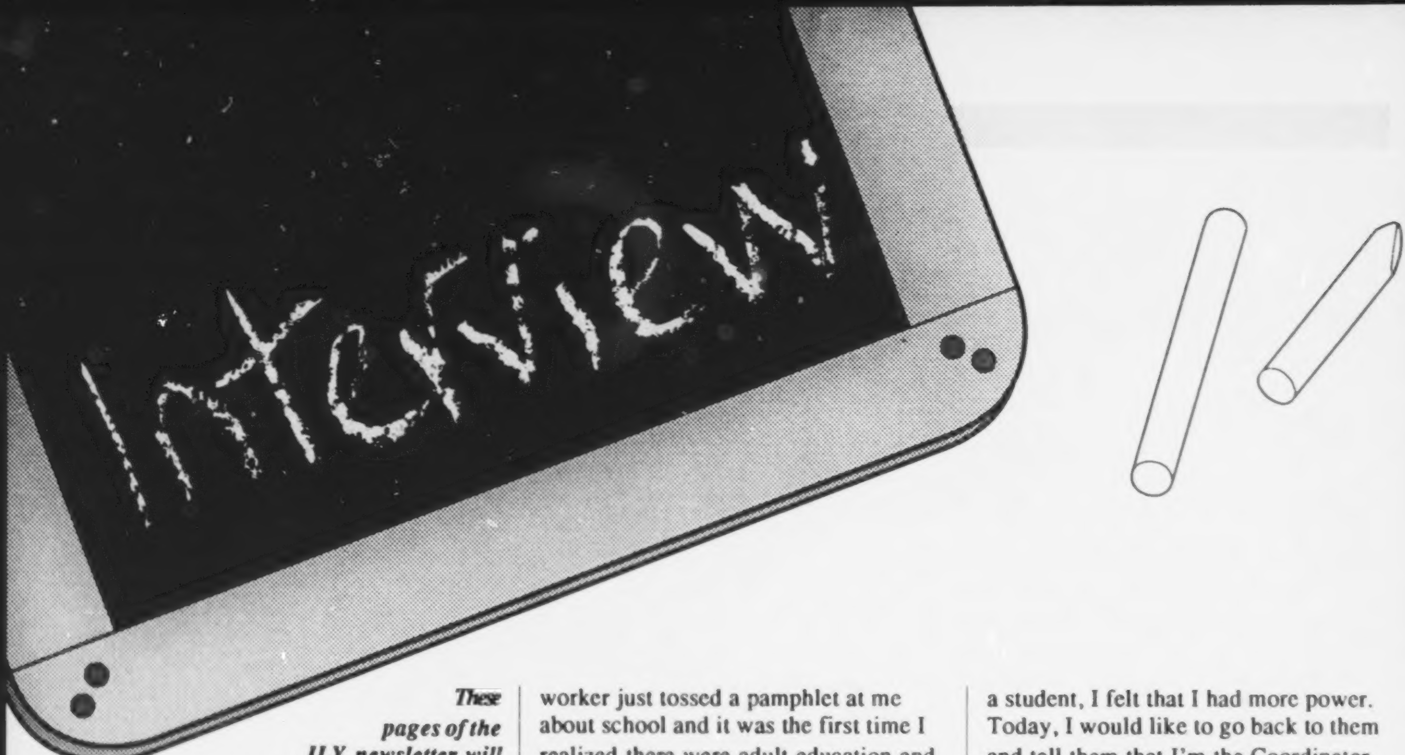


Sometimes in the literacy classes, some members miss a lot of classes. When they return to the program they find that their friends have advanced far ahead of them. So they begin to struggle and work as hard as possible to reach the level of the members who attend class regularly. Competition and concentration become very intense.

There are some persistent problems that we face. The main one is transportation. This hinders the branches' ability to monitor activities. Some branches make reports, but often the information is very scanty. The farm activities do not generate enough funds to run the branches. The beautiful handicrafts produced by the women and girls have no market where they could fetch decent prices. This problem has the effect of discouraging the members. It's hard to encourage innovation when we don't have places to sell our goods.

There is a general awareness among the population of the importance and value of being literate. So our branches are winning new members. But we don't have the facilities to cater to them. The Association, for example, has no printing facilities, so we cannot print primers or even newsletters so that new learners can keep on reading, be well-informed or even write their own articles. I am sure that they would be fascinated to read their own stories. It would make them feel that they are advancing and making a useful contribution.

The Association has run some branch seminars which are conducted in vernacular so that members can understand and can express themselves clearly when they are asking questions. One basic instructors' course was conducted this year, involving volunteers from different branches who return to their respective branches after the course to instruct their own members. The basic course lasts one week. The Association will also be conducting advanced instructors' courses lasting for two weeks, addressed to those instructors who have already attended the basic course.



These pages of the ILY newsletter will be a forum for learners from all around the world. Listening to learners' hopes and fears about International Literacy Year's impact on them will remind us all about who this Year is for -- the world's learners.

Four years ago, Robin Silverman and her child were living on Mothers' Allowance in Toronto.

Her Grade 10 high school education had left her functionally illiterate. She couldn't find work. Life felt like a vicious circle of powerlessness and impoverishment. But Robin had dreams.

Today she is the Coordinator of the Lakeshore Literacy Program in west-end Toronto, Canada.

ILY: Four years ago, how did you feel about your life?

Robin: I felt that I had been condemned. Because I had given birth, I was a criminal, sentenced to Mothers' Allowance (minimal government aid for mothers), Metro Housing (subsidized housing), bureaucracy in the educational system and people not believing me.

I used to go to the Family Benefits Office and yell at them because I couldn't even afford a pair of skates for my kid. Once when I was there, a worker just tossed a pamphlet at me about school and it was the first time I realized there were adult education and literacy programs.

ILY: What kinds of problems did you run into trying to get into the program?

Robin: I needed subsidized childcare, so I couldn't get right into the program. I had to wait until a spot came up in the childcare first.

ILY: What were the particular problems you encountered as a learner?

Robin: Well, for example, a learner on Mothers' Allowance might have to wait until the tenth of the month for a Metropass (which is provided by the welfare authorities), so she can't get to school, and if you miss more than ten days, you don't get your credits, and then your kid gets sick... And if you tried to complain, they would say that this is an adult program and you're acting like a child.

Then you wait and wait to see guidance counsellors who are run off their feet with administration, not guidance. So you get in to see them and you tell them you have some goals and they look at you and say, "I don't think you can do that."

Some educators don't like to give students power. In institutions, it's a question of control, not empowerment.

Despite these problems, when I became a student, I felt that I had more power. Today, I would like to go back to them and tell them that I'm the Coordinator of a Literacy Program!

ILY: What effect do you think increasing public awareness would have on some of these problems?

Robin: If the burden of responsibility and guilt is taken off the people who have the problem of illiteracy, then it would be easier for them to get some help. I don't know if you can ever do enough public awareness about this problem.

So many people think that learners are "disabled" in some way, that there is something wrong with them. It will take a lot to change that.

ILY: Let's talk about your experience as Coordinator of a Literacy Project.

Robin: Most of the students in my program are men, single and married, which is a different experience than mine as a single mother. Some of my students couldn't even sign their names, so, as inadequate as I used to feel, they must feel worse.

The Lakeshore is an industrial area. With the growing use of computers, some workers are getting laid off. One of the local unions trying to get workers into retraining programs has discovered that some workers don't have the basic skills like reading and writing. They

"As long as you have both new and experienced learners involved in the Year, they'll keep things on track, instead of creating little bureaucracies."

didn't need literacy skills in their old jobs, but in order to get a new job they have to learn.

Some people in Canada think that illiterates are all recent immigrants. My students are Canadian-born males, between the ages of 17 and 60.

Many of them are angry when they first come. Some, who have never told anyone they are illiterate, come in, sit down and pour out their story. So many come in and say "I'm retarded, I'm stupid".

Later they get angry when they understand what has happened to them. Many of them had been streamed into vocational or trade schools and not enough attention was paid to their reading and writing skills.

We tend to get more men in the programs. This doesn't mean there are more illiterate men than women. I'm not sure why this is, but we're all concerned about the problem.

ILY: What kinds of challenges are there in your work and how might ILY help?

Robin: If there was more public awareness then there would be more pressure on the government to fund us and we could expand our programs. Public awareness would also help remove the stigma of being illiterate. It might help remove the fear many people have that their friends or bosses would find out if they enrolled in a literacy program.

It is also really hard to get good literacy material in Canada. Even the beginner level material is not beginner level. It scares some of my students.

ILY: What do you think about the recent announcement that the Canadian Government will spend $110 million on literacy over the next five years?

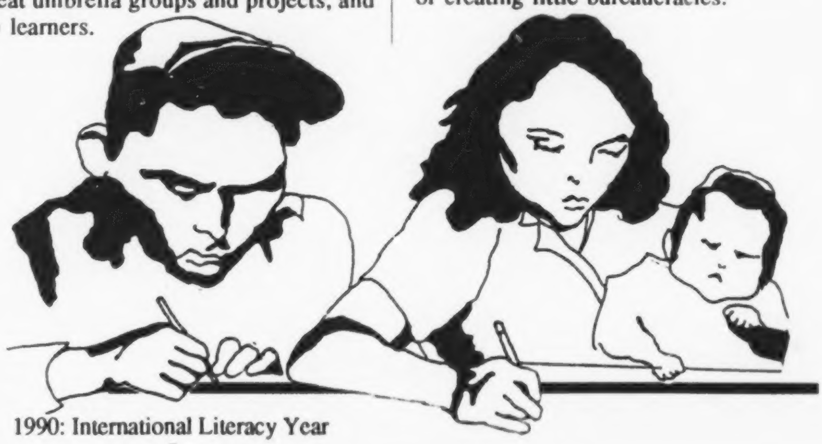
Robin: One concern I have is that the money being spent by the federal government won't go directly to community-based programs, but rather, to national organizations and special projects. Now, there are many good projects and organizations, but the public shouldn't be lulled into thinking that the problem is solved by this big splash. Some damage has been done to community-based projects that need money, because now people think that we have all this money. My fear is that at the end of all this, we will have these great umbrella groups and projects, and no learners.

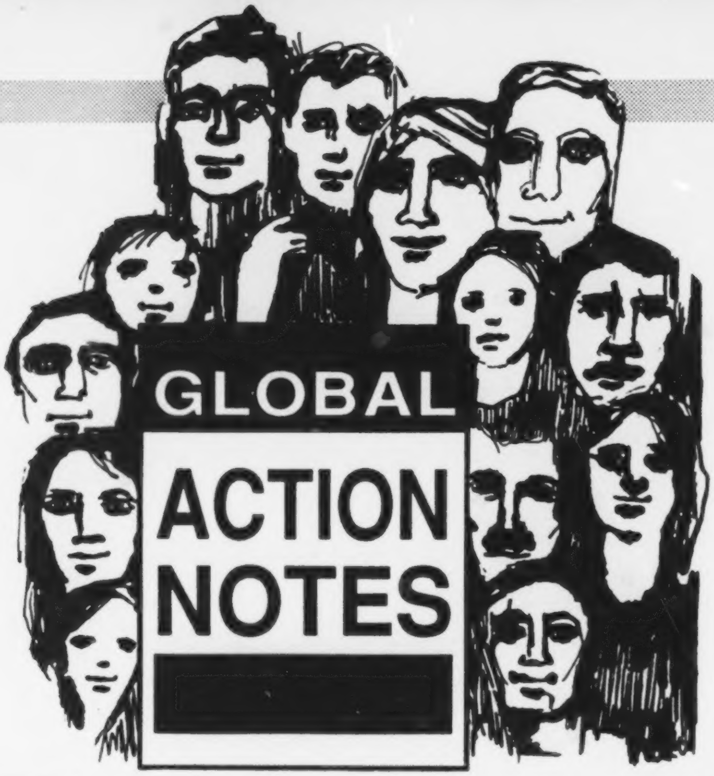
ILY: This is also one of our concerns about the Year. We want to make sure that the Year benefits learners.

Robin: During International Year for the Homeless, I was working for a grassroots organization in Toronto . I don't think I met one homeless person who knew it was their year. There probably wasn't anyone among the 20,000 homeless in Toronto who was affected by all the noise and wonderful plans. Sure, there were a lot of workshops for people from the suburbs about homelessness, then they counted the numbers of homeless people and that was it.

ILY: Are there any other things that you are concerned about?

Robin: I think that it's really important that learners be involved in the process of the Year. I think that as long as you have both new and experienced learners, they'll keep things on track, instead of creating little bureaucracies.





NGO Practical Guide

The NGO (Unesco) Standing Committee has produced an extremely useful and idea-provoking guide to prepare for International Literacy Year. The Guide stresses that "the Year is not an operation centrally orchestrated and funded from some world command post. What it is, what it achieves, largely depend on what people like you decide to do about it." Concrete ideas for activities range from "literacy censuses" to "themes for literacy messages" to a "literacy stamp" to "talent banks" for literacy volunteers. The next issue of the ITFL newsletter will show you more, but if you want your own copy, write to: the **Secretariat, International Literacy Year, Unesco House, 7, Place de Fontenoy, 75700 Paris, France.**

World YWCA and ILY

As a first step towards organizing for ILY, the World YWCA has sent two memos, a background paper and a questionnaire to all its national YWCAs. The most recent memo calls attention to the special role the YWCAs around the world can play in addressing the question of women and literacy. The questionnaire aims to gather information about the involvement of national YWCAs in the literacy movement, how the YWCAs relate other issues to the question of literacy, how literacy programs have improved learners' lives and plans for expansion of these programs leading up to 1990. The World YWCA has also begun to meet with other NGOs, including the World Council of Churches, the YMCA and ISIS to coordinate their efforts.

National Coordinating Commission in India

Lalita Ramdas, our indefatigable correspondent in India has reported on the first meeting of the National Coordinating Commission for ILY on July 20, 1988. The meeting felt that ILY should not become one more routine year like so many others before it. They felt that both human and material resources should go to where they are needed -- at the field level -- and not be wasted on unnecessary glitter and glamour. Participants were clear that literacy is a by product of deprivation and poverty and therefore literacy is an integral component of any development program.

A number of groups are seen as vital to efforts to mobilize for ILY, including the academic community, the media, women's organizations and development groups. A number of creative ideas were raised including a proposal to close down high schools and colleges during 1990, to provide a work force for literacy.

Literacy activists in India suggested that the ITFL set up an India office. Having an Indian office will enable the ITFL to stay in touch with developments that affect a large percentage of the world's illiterate people. The ITFL India office address is:
c/o Indian Adult Education Association,
17-B Indraprastha Marg, New Delhi
110 002, India.

YWCA of India

Radha Kumari, the Secretary for Adult Education of the YWCA of India met with the All India Committee on eradication of illiteracy among women and discussed coordination of efforts for the year. The YWCA of India is one of the founding members of the National Coordinating Commission that was recently set up to facilitate organization of the Year. During a National Debate on Draft Perspective Plan for Women, held during August, 1988, the YWCA of India was also able to raise the question of women and illiteracy.

International Resource Centre for Literacy

One of the recommendations in the plan of action developed by the International Task Force on Literacy at its meeting in West Berlin was to explore the possibility of carrying out a feasibility study on the creation of an International Resource Centre/ Clearing House for Literacy. This proposal was discussed at the meeting of the Nordic Task Force on ILY in Finland late this summer. The proposal was strongly supported by the Nordic Task Force and SIDA, NORAD, FINNIDA and DANIDA . They expressed their keen interest in supporting the feasibility study. A formal request for support as well as the terms of reference for the study have been prepared by the ICAE and submitted to the Nordic donor agencies for their consideration.

Literacy Activities in Malaysia

The Association for Continuing Education based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, along with the Unesco National Association of Malaysia, organized an essay contest in preparation for International Literacy Day, 1988. Topics for students' essays included: The need for Unesco; Unesco and its contribution to literacy programs; Why I support Unesco; Why the U.S., the U.K. and Singapore should consider rejoining Unesco. Results of the competition were announced on September 8, 1988. The Malaysian Airlines System, the Malayan Railways, embassies and High Commissions contributed air tickets, train tickets and books as prizes for the contest. Five new Unesco clubs were also set up on International Literacy Day.

Nordic Task Force Holds First Meeting

The Nordic Task Force for ILY held its first meeting in Lahti, Finland between August 31 and September 2, 1988. This Task Force is composed of all the National Commissions for Unesco from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

All the Nordic development assistance agencies, namely, SIDA, NORAD, FINNIDA and DANIDA are also members.

Representatives of the Unesco Headquarters, the ICAE and the Tanzanian Directorate of Adult Education were also invited to participate in the meeting.

The meeting discussed a wide range of activities and plans for ILY that the members of the Task Force had initiated or were planning to initiate.

Unesco Activities

For Unesco, the planning for International Literacy Year began more than three years ago. The U.N. agency was central to preparing a plan of action for the eradication of illiteracy by the year 2000. The culmination of this first stage of planning was the passage, by the U.N. General Assembly of a detailed resolution declaring 1990 as International Literacy Year and calling on Member States to take action.

During 1987-1988, Unesco carried out a variety of activities, including the sending of a questionnaire to all Member States, consultations with Member States, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations and with specialists in various fields.

A special Secretariat for International Literacy Year has been set up at Unesco headquarters in Paris, and an Associate Expert, Cilla Ungerth has been hired to assist in increasing public awareness of literacy as a need and right.

Unesco also formed an Intersectoral Task Force for ILY that will be chaired by Unesco's Director General, Federico Mayor. The first meeting of this Task Force took place in Paris on September 12, 1988.

The Unesco Collective Consultation of NGOs on Literacy met during September, 1988 in Istanbul for the Fifth Collective Consultation (C.C.V.). The main theme of the meeting was International Literacy Year. The ICAE is the co-chair of the Working Group on Literacy.

Among the recommendations approved by the C.C.V. was one related to the International Task Force on Literacy (ITFL), given the role of that body in facilitating the involvement of NGOs in preparations for the Year:

"The Fifth Collective Consultation of NGOs on Literacy commends the action taken by the ICAE to establish the ITFL as the main coordinating body for NGOs involved in preparing, implementing and evaluating ILY activities." The body further recommended that the Director-General of Unesco "(1) allocate consistent financial and moral support to ensure optimal coordination, implementation and evaluation of the ITFL's global plan for ILY and (2) recognize ITFL as a key partner with Unesco in mobilizing public support and resources for ILY and follow-up activities."

A report entitled "A Practical Guide For Non-Governmental Organizations, Unesco Clubs, Associated Schools and Other Interested Groups" has been prepared by the NGO Standing Committee. It contains a wealth of suggestions for activities for International Literacy Year. This and other reports on preparations for ILY can be obtained by writing to:

Secretariat for International Literacy Year,
Unesco House, 7 Place de Fontenoy,
75700 Paris, France.

International Task Force on Literacy

International Non-Governmental Organizations

Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Services
Disabled Peoples' International
International Council for Adult Education
International Reading Association
International Union of Students
World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession
World Council of Churches
World Council of Indigenous Peoples
World Young Women's Christian Association

Regional Non-Governmental Organizations

African Association for Literacy and Adult Education
Arab Regional Literacy Organization
Asian South Pacific Bureau for Adult Education
Caribbean Regional Council for Adult Education
Consejo de Educación de Adultos de America Latina
European Bureau for Adult Education

Cooperating Bodies

Canadian International Development Agency
German Foundation for International Development
Swedish International Development Authority

Host Country - Canada

Host Country Cooperating Bodies

Movement for Canadian Literacy
Regroupement des Groupes Populaires d'Alphabétisation du Québec

Participants at the second meeting of the International Task Force on Literacy, West Berlin, October, 1987

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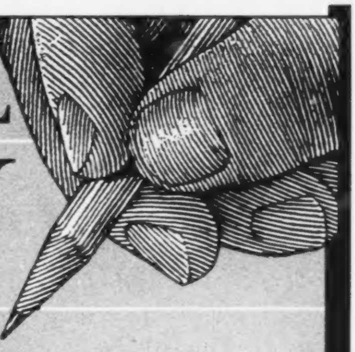
1990 INTERNATIONAL LITERACY YEAR

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL TASK FORCE ON LITERACY



Number 2, January, 1989

Voluntary Sector Mobilizes for Year

International News Conference

Not very many people in the world know that 1990 is International Literacy Year.

That should change on March 2, 1989, when the International Task Force on Literacy (ITFL), in cooperation with Unesco will hold an international news conference concurrently in over twenty cities from Dakar to New York.

The news conference is an initiative of the International Task Force on Literacy, a coalition of international and regional organizations and cooperating bodies, which is cooperating with Unesco and the United Nations. The ITFL recently concluded its third meeting, where the Task Force was expanded and plans for International Literacy Year projects were refined (see "Task Force Meets" on this page).

The news conference will alert organizations in the voluntary and private sectors of preparations for International Literacy Year.

The news conference will attract international, regional, national and local media attention. A videocassette containing messages from leading representatives of Unesco and the ITFL will be the element that unifies all the media events. In most cities representatives of Unesco and the ITFL will co-chair the event with local literacy groups providing participants who can address the specific problems of illiteracy in their own areas. The international event will demonstrate the complexity of the problem of illiteracy and the diversity of responses to it.

To emphasize the grassroots approach of the ITFL, all of the news conferences will be held at literacy sites and feature testimonials from learners themselves, thus underlining the importance the ITFL gives to the participation of learners in planning for International Literacy Year.

Unesco NGO Standing Committee Recognizes Literacy Task Force

At its meeting in Paris, December 13-17, the NGO Standing Committee adopted a resolution recognizing the establishment of the ITFL. The Standing Committee will be represented by two of its members in the ITFL and invites all NGOs to participate in activities in support of Unesco's program for International Literacy Year. Unesco's Director General was invited to promote full cooperation between the ITFL and Unesco's ILY Secretariat.

For the Task Force, the success of the Year will be measured by its real impact on the people it is organized for -- learners. In order to assure this success, the ITFL believes that learners, who best understand the problems and challenges of literacy, must be integrated into the planning process for the Year.

Cities confirmed for the news launch include: New York, Paris, Delhi, Dakar, Nairobi, Managua , London, Ottawa and Tunis. Other cities, as yet unconfirmed, include: Tokyo, Moscow, Mexico City, Lahore, andBeijing.

Any other cities wishing to participate in this international event are invited to get in touch with the organizer of the news conference, John Piper, in Toronto, Canada (416) 483-5228 or the ITFL Coordinating Office (416) 588-1211.

Task Force Meets

Representatives of 27 international and regional non-governmental organizations met in Chantilly, France, on December 10-12, 1988 to discuss preparations for International Literacy Year 1990.

The representatives are members of the International Task Force on Literacy, a coalition of voluntary sector organizations determined to take advantage of the U.N. declared International Literacy Year to push forward efforts to empower the approximately two billion people in the world who cannot read or write.

continued on back page

Preparing

Forming National Committees

International Literacy Year (ILY) represents an exceptional opportunity for learners, literacy practitioners and researchers to deepen public awareness on the issue and translate that awareness into strengthening existing literacy structures and creating new ones. ILY provides an international framework for the broadest diversity of activities, each appropriate to local and national conditions and needs.

The International Task Force on Literacy brings together international and regional organizations to function as a catalyst and umbrella for International Literacy Year activities. Members of the Task Force are planning their own contributions to ILY and considering possibilities for joint projects. This kind of collaboration will be a lasting effect of International Literacy Year and greatly improve non-governmental cooperation. The ITFL is also initiating a couple of international projects that National Committees may find useful for their own plans (see articles on News Conference and "The Possibilities are Endless).

At a national level, the same process can happen, pulling together all voluntary and private organizations that share a concern about literacy, but bring a diversity of approaches and practices. Such national coalitions might include, like the ITFL, organizations representing women, indigenous peoples, working and farming people, churches, social service organizations, business literacy programs and others involved in literacy work.

Governmental National Committees

Unesco, the lead U.N. agency for ILY, has called on all Member States to establish Government National Committees for ILY. As of this writing, 14 countries had done so -- Cameroon, Congo, Swaziland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Mongolia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Chile, Mexico, Egypt, Belgium and the GDR. The relationship between the governmental and non-governmental sectors varies from country to country and non-governmental organizations will obviously decide on their relations with the governmental initiative. In countries that have withdrawn from Unesco, no governmental committees will be established.

The Role of Non-Governmental National Committees

In many countries in the world, much of the literacy work is being done by non-governmental organizations. These organizations tend to be closer to the actual practice of literacy and the grassroots, and thus have specific and grounded concerns in the field of literacy. The formation of non-governmental/voluntary National Committees could greatly strengthen the impact that International Literacy Year can have in each country. Non-governmental national committees can also encourage organizations with common concerns about literacy work together more effectively, learn from each other's experience, initiate joint projects and become stronger advocates for putting literacy on the country's political agenda.

If, in your country, there are a number of non-governmental organizations involved in literacy work, the basis may exist to form a National Committee to do common advocacy work, engage in common activities in preparation for and during ILY.

The ITFL can help. We currently represent 27 international non-govern-

The Possibilities Are

These are just a few ideas that are being discussed in different local, national and international organizations around the world.

- Produce a directory of literacy organizations in your country.
- Produce and tour a play about literacy involving learners.
- In collaboration with a local newspaper, hold a poster contest for ILY.
- Ask a local newspaper to run articles by newly-literate people during 1990.
- Convince a well-known sports figure to do a television spot on literacy.
- Interview a well-known literary figure about the importance of literacy.
- Initiate joint projects between literacy organizations and organizations of women, workers, indigenous people, disabled people, landless or jobless people...
- Hold your own local press conference on March 2, 1989 as part of the ITFL's global news conference.
- Have a well-known musician write a song about literacy for International Literacy Year.

for 1990

mental organizations (see list on back page) involved in literacy work in many countries of the world. We are compiling lists for each country of the national branches of the ITFL member organizations. These lists will be completed by April 1, 1989. Combined with your own contacts these lists could provide the basis for an initial letter inviting national organizations to consider the possibility of forming a National Committee.

Interested organizations might meet to brainstorm about the literacy situation in the country, the role such a Committee might play, its relationship to the Governmental National Committee (if it exists), the resources available and possible activities that could be undertaken to prepare for the year. Please write to the ITFL Coordinating Office and let us know if a National Commitee has been formed in your country.

Endless...

- Invite local and national media to brainstorm together about how the media can participate in International Literacy Year.
- Create a literacy component for already planned events. For example, how could literacy become part of a concert? a soccer match? a film festival? a public celebration?
- Participate in the ITFL's Book Voyage (details in the next issue of the newsletter).
- Write to the ITFLwith your own ideas and for more materials.

Involving Learners

The following is a Declaration adopted at he third meeting of the International Task Force on Literacy in December, 1988.

Our Aims

To build a movement of learners.
To create a learner-centred planning process.

Why Involve Learners?

Learners know their own problems and needs best.
Learners are stigmatized and marginalized.
The process of participation is integral to the process of learning.
Learner-centred methodology must involve learners.
Learner involvement changes the relationship between learner and instructor, towards a relationship of co-learning.
Learner involvement validates programs, increases efficiency and effectiveness.
Learner involvement encourages self-reliance and self-determination, dignity and self-confidence.
Learner involvement creates possibilities for self-help, advocacy and movement for social change.
Learners' participation changes everything.

How to Get Learners Involved?

Create the conditions and the environment to ensure learner involvement.
Change the definition of learner to emphasize process and not chronological position.
Redefine the basic concepts and definitions.
Promote participation of learners in all results of ITFL deliberations (posters, documents, slogans, etc.)
Involve learners in all aspects and activities for International Literacy Year.

Practical Suggestions International

Involve learners in future ITFL meetings.
Involve learners in delegations to Unesco.
Organize special sessions for learners at world congress.
Unesco should involve learners in long-term policy discussions.

National

Learners should be involved in National Committees for International Literacy Year.
At least one conference for learners in 1990 should be organized to develop learners' own perspectives.
Each NGO should organize a meeting/workshop to develop the collective voice of learners.

Local

Any needs assessment must involve learners.
Local programs must involve learners in planning.
Learners' perspective must be a critical factor in evaluation.
Learners have to become facilitators.

Resources must be available for learner participation.
Involving learners is a co-responsibility and the ITFL should take a leadership role.
We need to collect and disseminate learner-involvement examples.
We need to try to reach the most vulnerable learners who are the most difficult to reach.
We need to address the particular needs of disabled learners.
If we're serious about developing a democratic movement, no meetings related to ILY activities should happen unless learners are fully involved.
The ITFL does not have to right to say that we speak for learners unless learners are involved in the planning process.

If readers have ideas or experiences in involving learners in literacy planning. activities and evaluation, please write to the ITFL Coordinating Office in Toronto, Canada.

continued from front page

This was the third meeting of the Task Force, which was founded in October, 1987. The Chantilly meeting was an extraordinary meeting called to respond to growing interest on the part of voluntary sector organizations eager to work with others in the cause of literacy.

New members included representatives from the Bahai International Community, World Education, Inc., Women's International Democratic Federation, Disabled Peoples International, the World Federation of Unesco Clubs, Associations and Centres. Present as observers were: the Commonwealth Trade Union Council, the World Scout Movement, ATD-Quart Monde, who are all expected to join the Task Force. (See complete list of ITFL members on this page.)

Highlights of the meeting included discussions on the March 2, 1989 international news conference, plans for an international televised event to raise global consciousness about the problem of illiteracy, a grassroots-oriented book voyage with written contributions from newly literate people around the globe, the importance of involving learners in preparations for the Year and the third world perspective on illiteracy.

Special guests at the meeting included A. Chiba, Acting Assistant Director-General, Education, John Ryan, Associate Coordinator of the ILY Secretariat of Unesco, Dieter Berstecher, Unesco liaison with UNICEF.

Participants felt that the meeting was productive and that the ITFL is becoming more focussed and concrete in its plans for International Literacy Year. The next meeting of the Task Force will take place in Kenya, April 10-15, 1989.

International Task Force on Literacy

International Non-Governmental Organizations

The Bahai International Community
Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Services
Disabled Peoples' International
International Council for Adult Education
International Reading Association
International Union of Students
Laubach Literacy International
World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession
World Council of Churches
World Council of Indigenous Peoples
World Education Inc.
World Federation of Unesco Clubs, Associations and Centres
Women's International Democratic Federation
World Young Women's Christian Association

Regional Organizations

African Association for Literacy and Adult Education
Arab Regional Literacy Organization
Asian South Pacific Bureau for Adult Education
Caribbean Regional Council for Adult Education
Consejo de Educación de Adultos de America Latina
European Bureau for Adult Education

Cooperating Bodies

Canadian International Development Agency
German Foundation for International Development
Swedish International Development Authority
Norwegian Agency for International Development
Unesco Institute for Education

Host Country Cooperating Bodies

Movement for Canadian Literacy
Regroupement des Groupes Populaires d'Alphabétisation du Québec

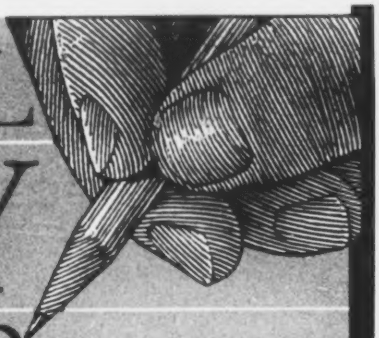
International Task Force on Literacy
Coordinating Office
720 Bathurst Street, Ste. 500
Toronto, Ontario Canada M5S 2R4
Telephone: (416) 588-1211
FAX: (416) 588-5725
TELEX: 06-986766 TOR

Other Offices in Paris and New Delhi

1990 INTERNATIONAL LITERACY YEAR

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL TASK FORCE ON LITERACY

Number 3, February, 1989



1990

A Year For Action

WITH International Literacy Year a little over six months away, many literacy practitioners and organizations are beginning to plan their activities for 1990.

In this third issue of the ITFL newsletter, we would like to introduce you to an outstanding publication, **International Literacy Year: A Practical Guide for Non-Governmental Organizations, Unesco Clubs, Associated Schools and Other Interested Groups.** The ideas included in this newsletter represent only a tiny part of this thorough and exciting document.

As the Guide states: "...International Literacy Year is not an operation centrally orchestrated and funded from some world command post. What it is, what it achieves, largely depend on what people like you decide to do about it."

The guide lists five major objectives for International Literacy Year:

1. *Increasing action by governments*
2. *Increasing public awareness*
3. *Increasing public participation*
4. *Increasing cooperation and solidarity among governments*
5. *Increasing cooperation within the UN system and among non-governmental organizations*

The NGO (Unesco) Standing Committee is a group of 15 international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), elected by a biennial conference of NGOs in consultative relationship (Categories A and B) with Unesco, to facilitate collective consultation and cooperation towards the achievement of Unesco's ideals. ■

The Practical Guide is available by writing to:

NGO (Unesco) Standing Committee
7, place de Fontenoy
75700 Paris, FRANCE
Telephone: 43 68 01 33
Cable: Unesco Paris — Bureau: S.388,
Salles des ONG
Telex: 204461

Objective No. 1

Increasing Government Action

Literacy Census

Interested groups can participate in or initiate "literacy censuses", which can yield important qualitative as well as quantitative information.

Literacy White Papers

The experience and insights of NGOs and other interested groups can be invaluable in the formulation of policy and the preparation of legislation.

Organizing Volunteers

NGOs can organize youth camps and other forms of voluntary service to build or repair schools and literacy centres and equipment. Interested groups might offer their own premises or provide transport facilities for literacy learners, workers, supervisors, equipment or materials.

Learners with Special Needs

NGOs can be effective channels of communication for reaching, teaching and understanding special segments of the population wishing literacy instruction, such as the blind, the disabled, linguistic/ethnic minorities, refugees, migrants, single mothers, criminal offenders, etc.

NGO Role in Monitoring and Evaluation

NGOs and other interested groups are well-placed to be a "finger on the pulse," offering information and analysis on achievements and problems. At the end of campaigns, interested groups using the participatory research approach, may play an important role in describing and interpreting what has happened. NGOs can also play a key role in post-literacy reading and learning strategies. ■

Objective No. 2

Increasing Public Awareness

ABCDEFG
abcdefg
HIJKLM
hijklm
NOPQRS
nopqrs
TUV
tuv

Literacy Messages

The basic facts and figures for a given community, country, region or the world might form the basis of an effective literacy message. The particular plight of vulnerable groups, such as women, the poorest of the poor, or the disabled, might help the public focus on neglected aspects of the problem. The relationship between illiteracy and underdevelopment can deepen the public's understanding of the problem of illiteracy and its solution. First person accounts/interviews of new literates and literacy workers can bring the topic home to a general audience with special force.

Literacy Awards

Any organization can mark International Literacy Year by establishing an award for literacy instruction, learners' achievements, work about — and to promote — literacy.

Literacy Ambassadors

Groups of prominent public figures can be created to give your literacy message an extra something. Artists, writers, media personalities and sports figures are among the many possibilities.

ILY News Service

An ILY News Service at a local, national or regional level could supply the media with regular releases on the work of groups involved in literacy. The ILY News Service might be a cooperative project of all the NGOs involved in literacy work in the area.

Literacy Open House

Literacy centres, teachers' unions, parents' associations, student groups, libraries, post-literacy newspapers and publishing houses could hold "open door" days or evenings on literacy.

Literacy Museums

Particularly in towns, provinces or countries where mass campaigns have taken place, a literacy museum could be created.

Folk, Street and Traditional Theatre

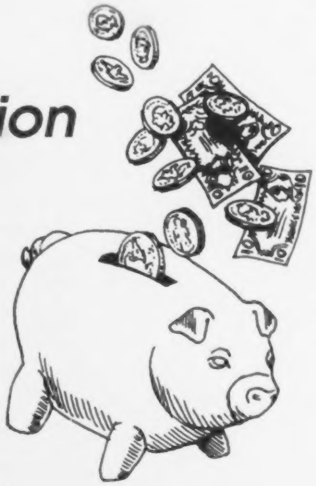
Literacy plays, perhaps written and produced by learners and practitioners can be mounted and toured locally, regionally or nationally.

Literacy Murals

Giant murals (temporary or permanent) can be painted collectively on fences, public buildings and other surfaces. ■

Objective No. 3

Increasing Popular Participation



New Partners

In order to achieve broad popular mobilization, NGOs and other interested groups need to identify and activate new ILY partners. Categories of new partners include: the business community, publishers of books, periodicals and other commercial matter, basic public services, academia (including teachers' unions, students' organizations and professional academics groups), the excluded, including landless peasants, the poorest of the poor, the imprisoned, abused women, long-term unemployed and indigenous people.

Twinning for Literacy

Twinning towns, schools, literacy programs or individual learners, offers an excellent framework for exchanges and "people-to-people" cooperation in the field of literacy. Where technology allows, even satellite links might be possible between countries, thus increasing understanding of the global problem of illiteracy.

Fundraising

Organizations like unions and churches could encourage "voluntary taxation for literacy." Walkathons for literacy can collect money from sponsors. Classical, folk and pop concerts can raise money. Sports matches might also be appropriate occasions to raise funds. ■

Objective No. 4

Increasing Cooperation and Solidarity Among Nations

Although this area most logically falls to governments, NGOs have an important role to play in resource transfers from the more to the less-privileged nations, as well as encouraging dialogue and solidarity, instead of paternalism.

South–South Cooperation

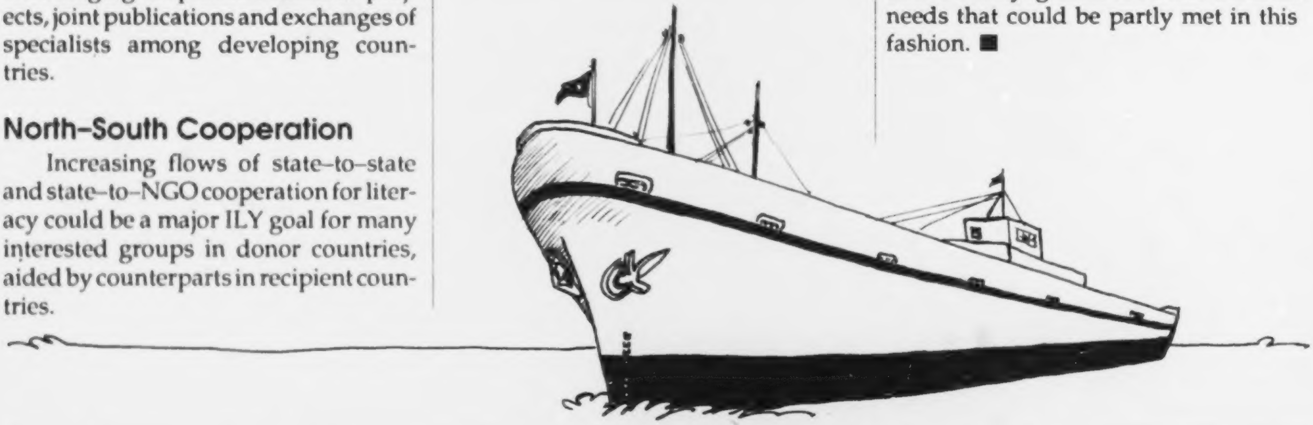
NGOs can play an important role in encouraging cooperative research projects, joint publications and exchanges of specialists among developing countries.

North–South Cooperation

Increasing flows of state-to-state and state-to-NGO cooperation for literacy could be a major ILY goal for many interested groups in donor countries, aided by counterparts in recipient countries.

Informing and Arousing Public Opinion

Travelling exhibitions of donor countries' overseas cooperation for literacy could be shown to secondary school students, women's associations and trade unions. A special task force of interested groups could be set up to set targets for participation and establish plans for achieving them.



Literacy Cooperation in Kind

In the last decade, some 130,000 used but still serviceable hand tools have been donated by householders and enterprises to volunteer bodies in industrialized countries that have repaired and delivered them, free of charge, to developing country producer-learner groups. Mimeograph machines, treadle sewing machines, books and eyeglasses are other material needs that could be partly met in this fashion. ■

Objective No. 5

Increasing Cooperation Within the UN System, and Among Non-Governmental Organizations

Within Groups

International, regional, national and local NGOs could consider: working out an organization-wide ILY action plan; devoting meetings of their governing bodies to the planning and monitoring of ILY activities; consulting and informing their members about ILY activities through their newsletters, bulletins, magazines, journals etc.; issuing an ILY action guide; and distributing this Guide to certain or all of their affiliates.

Among Groups

Task forces for ad hoc projects, alliances, coalitions, networks and coordinating committees might be appropriate means to facilitate cooperation among NGOs. At the local level, in villages, rural districts and city neighbourhoods, closest to the illiterate, functionally illiterate and new literates, special care may be needed to involve community groups that are not affiliated to national organizations. At the national level, contact could be made with the central government and other national structures (economic, cultural, etc.), including the special body designated for ILY, and national groups enjoying special relationships with various bodies of the UN system that could be activated for ILY. At the regional and international levels, NGOs and other interested groups can cooperate more closely than in the past with such entities as Unesco's regional and sub-regional offices for education and Unesco's major regional education programmes one of whose objectives is the elimination of illiteracy. ■

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720 Bathurst Street, Ste. 500
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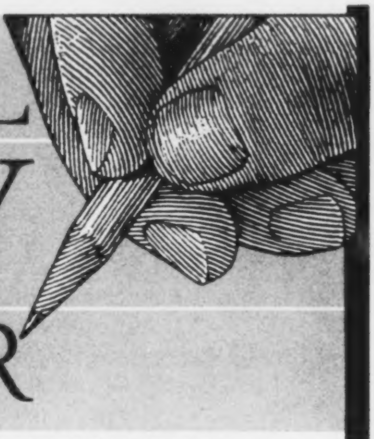
1990 INTERNATIONAL LITERACY YEAR



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL TASK FORCE ON LITERACY

Number 4, July, 1989

LEARNERS SPEAK OUT ON LITERACY AND ILY

A GROUP OF seven African learners and one Canadian were brought together in Mombasa, Kenya in April 1989 to share their experiences. They talked about the benefits of becoming literate, the difficulties of juggling classes with adult responsibilities, the humiliation they faced by being illiterate and their views on International Literacy Year.

> ***"I was told what impressed the learners from Kenya the most was that there was a white learner. They thought only black people could be illiterate. That made my being there even more important!"***
>
> —Robin Silverman, Canada

What have been some of the benefits of becoming literate?

- Since I am a farmer and have to send my cashew nuts to market, I was never sure if I got a fair price for my product. Now that I know how, I can weigh and price the nuts myself and then give them to the gentleman knowing that I won't be cheated.

- Before I joined literacy classes, there used to be different women's groups involved in various development activities. I could not join those groups because I couldn't read or write. Now that I can, I have joined a number of these women's groups and I am often the one who writes the minutes of the meetings.

- I can now write my own name and that makes me feel proud and self-confident.

What were some of the difficulties you encountered as an adult on your path to becoming literate?

- We as adults have a lot of problems in the sense that we have to work very hard and we have various kinds of commitments: looking after our children, our mates, our jobs and household duties. It is not easy for us to take advantage of literacy. It is difficult to attend the classes on a regular basis. This slows down our progress and we cannot achieve full literacy.

- We have difficulties travelling around in our cities because they are vast and have confusing public transit systems. Many people have been terrified because they got lost on the streets and were not able to find their way home. When they had to ask for directions they felt humiliated. Some will lie and say, "I forgot my glasses, could you please tell me what that sign says?" Humiliation and degradation in Canada is so severe that many illiterates don't tell their own families that they can't read and write. Since education is so accessible you feel that you are very stupid or that there is something wrong with you or that you are brain damaged.

Continued on page 2

LITERACY AND THE MEDIA

AN INTERNATIONAL colloquium on literacy and the media was held in Paris, May 16-17, 1989. Representatives from seventeen press agencies, television and radio networks were in attendance. Delegates from Japan, the USSR, the United States, Great Britain, Australia, Nigeria, Senegal, Canada, Pakistan, Brazil, India, France, Mali and Kuwait discussed media action and impact on literacy.

Jim Duffy, President of communications for Capital Cities / ABC, made the following comment: "The media are playing a central role in the literacy situation in our countries and can play a still more central role. The media can be a facilitator, a unifier or can bring awareness of the scale and seriousness of the problem. Perhaps most importantly the media can join in a call for action."

Left: Jack Harr, Vice President; Office of Communications, Founder and Project Director for Project Literacy U.S.A. (PLUS). Right: Vilionar Yegorov, Member of the Board—USSR State Television and Radio.

In his opening address, Federico Mayor, Unesco Executive Director, referrred to the American linguist, M. Fishman: "Mr. Fishman has made the point that the introduction of writing systems and the diffusion of literacy are revolutionary, not narrowly technical acts, and that their success or failure depends upon the outcome of the wider revolutions of which they are a part: revolutions in the consumption and production of economic goods and in the distribution of power and influence. It is, I believe, in contributing to these revolutionary acts that the media make their most valuable and indispensable contributions to literacy."

A copy of the final report can be obtained from the ITFL Secretariat in Toronto for $5 (postage and handling).

ILY Play:

"DEVELOPING FREEDOM"

Premiere: September 8, 1989
and will tour across Canada

For more information contact:

World Literacy of Canada
692 Coxwell Avenue
Toronto, Ontario
M4C 3B6 Canada
Tel: (416) 465-4667

Learners Speak Out

Continued from page 1

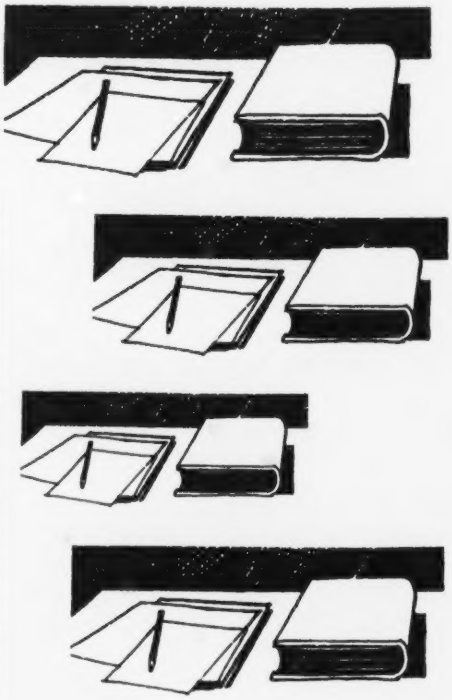
What are your feelings about International Literacy Year?

• I have seen other International Years and many of these are tea parties where social liberals discuss the issue. A lot of money is spent on meetings to discuss the year and in the end nothing is ever done to improve the situation. In the Year of the Homeless, I never met a homeless person who knew that it was their year. I never met a homeless person who got housing as a result of that year. I am urging you not to do that. I have heard some comments such as "give power and authority to the people". We can do better by exchanging our experiences. We can ask the learners about their interests and concerns so they can have input into ILY activities. You can be sure their concerns and agendas will be different from the organizers.

Learners Panel: Mr. Mbotze Bakari Mbiru, Mr. Mwanakombo Moyo, Mr. Saidi Limo, Ms. Mejumaa Bakari, Ms. Sita Bakari, Mr. Suleiman Mwaambwe, Ms. Kikoleba, Ms. Robin Silverman.

STRENGTHENING STRUCTURES

AN INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR LITERACY?



DO WE NEED a centre that can provide information on literacy research and evaluation to practitioners in different parts of the world? Would this fill a need which present organizations are unable to fulfill?

When the ITFL met in Berlin in May 1988, the idea was put forward and support given to the suggestion that an international resource centre for literacy might be a useful ILY 1990 project.

Four Nordic governments, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland have funded a feasibility study to look into setting up such a centre.

The International Council for Adult Education has been asked to undertake the study and two consultants, Nelly Stromquist of the University of Southern California and Nicholas Kuhanga, former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania have been hired to undertake the study.

Literacy specialists and potential users around the world are being asked for input. What should be the functions of such a centre? How best could it serve the information needs of the literacy movement? Where should it be located? How could new technologies best be used?

If you have views about such a centre please contact the International Council for Adult Education. The final report is expected by the end of December 1989.

Information Exchange Network

The Unesco Institute for Education (UIE) has recently established an "Information Exchange Network" concerning functional literacy in industrialized countries with the support and cooperation of Unesco, Paris

Unesco Institute for Education,
Documentation Centre
Feldbrunnenstrasse 58
2000 Hamburg 12
Federal Republic of Germany
Tel: 040 44 78 43

Contributions?

All comments, articles, opinions, poems, short stories and personal experiences, on the topic of literacy will inspire our future newsletters. Send it to ITFL coordinating office in Toronto, Canada.

Send all correspondence to:
Darlene Owens

The ITFL Newsletter's team is:
Motoyo
Raimunda
Darlene
Budd
Yusuf
Josée

EMPOWERING DIMENSION OF LITERACY

THE MOST profound, far-reaching and significant impact of literacy on people's lives is its empowering potential. To be literate is to become liberated from the constraints of dependency. To be literate is to gain a voice and to participate meaningfully and assertively in decisions that affect people's lives. To be literate is to gain self-confidence and to become self-assertive. To be literate is to become politically conscious and critically aware, and to demystify social reality. Literacy enables people to read one's own world and to write history.

Literacy makes people aware of their basic human rights. Literacy enables people to have a greater degree of control over their own lives. Literacy helps people to become self-reliant and resist exploitation and oppression. Literacy provides access to written knowledge and knowledge is power.

COMMONWEALTH

INSTITUTE

WORKSHOP

"Literacy: Questions of People, Language and Power"

Place: Commonwealth
Institute,
London U.K.

Dates: April 6-7 1989

For more information contact:

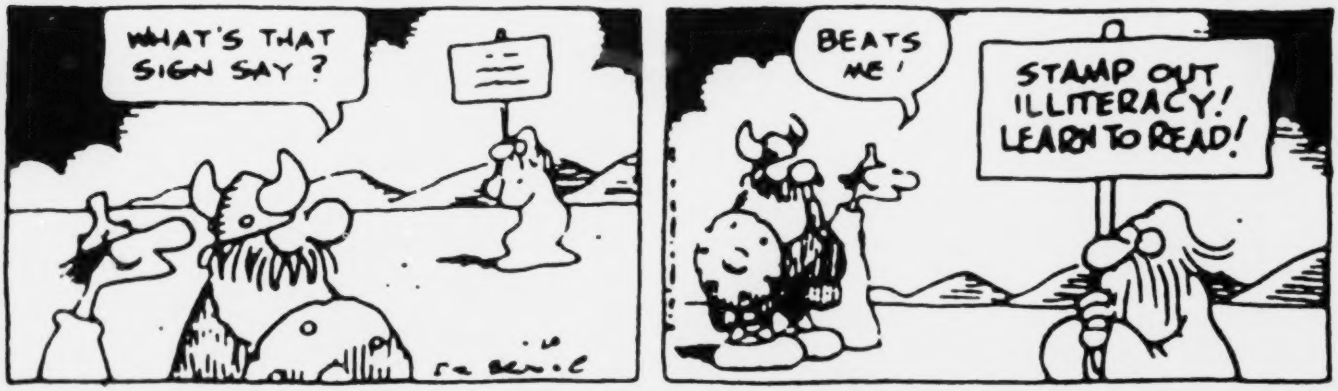
Commonwealth Institute
Kensington High St.
W8 6NQ London, U.K.
Tel: 01 603 4535

45TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE CORRECTIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION (FOCUSING ON LITERACY ISSUES)

Vancouver, Canada
July, 1990

For more information:

International CEA Conference
Office of Continuing Studies
Simon Fraser University,
Burnaby, British Columbia V5A 1S6
Canada


WHAT'S THAT SIGN SAY ?
BEATS ME !
STAMP OUT ILLITERACY! LEARN TO READ!

NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR AFRICAN WOMEN

THE AFRICAN Association for Literacy and Adult Education (AALAE) is playing a very important role in the training of women in literacy. They have embarked on a needs assessment which is being carried out in seven different African countries: Nigeria, Mali, Rwanda, Mozambique, Tanzania, Botswana and Uganda.

The needs assessment will be carried out at the grassroots level focusing on rural women and the specific types of problems that they face in trying to attend literacy classes. A women cannot attend classes when there is no water at home. They find themselves in the position of having to choose between collecting firewood and going for water or attending literacy classes. Another problem is that after working very hard all day long they are too tired and find themselves unable to concentrate in these classes.

Therefore, this needs assessment will study these particular problems and others and try to structure schedules for training and classes appropriately. They are also looking at local projects in which the women can learn and at the same time earn a small income as a motivator. They expect to train women in a variety of different skills but especially leadership and decision making skills which build confidence.

In a recent speech to the International Task Force on Literacy (ITFL) meeting in Mombasa, Kenya, Majanja-Zaali, the coordinator of the needs assessment said, "Empowering women through literacy is not so they will frighten their husbands but to be able to be equal partners in development."

For more information contact:

African Association for Literacy
and Adult Education
Box 50768
Nairobi, Kenya

ITFL ACTIVITIES

ITFL is a coalition of international non-governmental organizations with representation from all five continents.

TORONTO OFFICE

- ITFL had its 4th meeting in Mombasa, Kenya on April 10-15 1989. A full report on this meeting will be available in July.
- While in Mombasa, ITFL members went on Study Visits to various Literacy Centres. Representatives (Learners) from the Centres then joined the ITFL meeting and participated on a "Learners Panel" and in open discussions.
- Two additional panels were held in Mombasa on the situtation in Africa and the World Conference on Education for All.
- Selected media executives, with the help of the ITFL and the cooperation of the Literacy Secretariat of Unesco, organized a colloquium on "Literacy and the Media" which was held in Paris, May 16-17 1989.
- The ITFL.Newsletter will now be published bimonthly.
- Majanja-Zaali from Uganda has written an ILY anthem and is now composing the music for it. It will be published in a future issue of our newsletter.

For more information on the activities of the Toronto office please contact:

International Task Force on Literacy
Coordinating Office
720 Bathurst Street, Ste. 500
Toronto, Ontario Canada M5s 2R4
Telephone: (416) 588-1211
Fax: (416) 588-5725
Telex: 06-986766 TOR

INDIA OFFICE

- There is a 30 minute film under production with special emphasis on ILY 1990.
- The production of a monthly newsletter is well underway with the focus on ILY 1990.
- Plans are being developed for a bi-annual literacy magazine with articles by experts in different fields of literacy from India and the Southern Asian Region.
- Preparations are being made for a 2 minute television spot on the topic of ILY.
- Tentative plans have been arranged for a "Music Star Concert" to raise resources for literacy.
- A small committee has been formed to work on the "Book Voyage" project.
- Plans are underway to produce an "ILY 1990 Calendar".

For more information on the activities of the India office please contact:

International Task Force on Literacy
India Office
c/o Indian Adult Education Association
17-B Indraprastha Marg
New Delhi - 1100002 India
Tel: 331 9282
Cable: ADEO ASSO NEW DELHI

1990 INTERNATIONAL LITERACY YEAR

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL TASK FORCE ON LITERACY

Number 5, August, 1989

BIG PUSH NEEDED FOR SEPTEMBER 8

eptember 8 is International Literacy Day. Members of the International Task Force on Literacy call on literacy groups, newspapers, media, government departments, voluntary and non-governmental groups everywhere to promote literacy by lending visibility to learners and literacy on September 8.

A special role for learners

How can learners themselves be involved in organizing events for September 8? How can those of us in the literacy movement make more space for learners to speak directly to the public or in forums with each other and literacy workers? Can learners speak directly to the newspapers, radio or television?

Announcements of plans for International Literacy Year

September 8 is an ideal time to publicize plans which your organization has for International Literacy Year. The press will be looking for materials. What better time to let others know about the ideas and work which you feel is important.

A celebration for the literacy movement

Some groups are using September 8 as a day of celebration for the literacy movement in local and other levels.

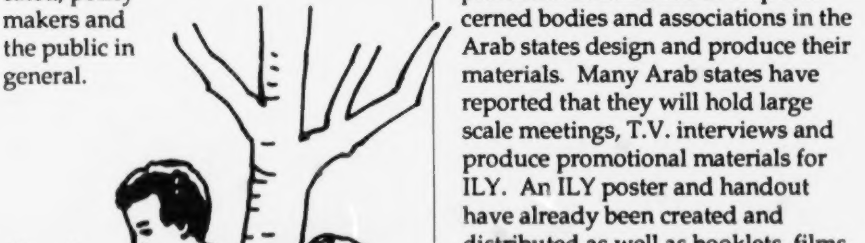
Continued on page 5

Arab Region Prepares for ILY

FOR THE YEARS 1989 and 1990, the Arab Regional Literacy Organization (ARLO) has provided concerned bodies in Arab States with a practical guide on planning informational and promotional work in the field of Literacy and Adult Education. By the end of the year 1989 a complete series of the Pan-Arab T.V. Literacy Programme: "An el -Awan" ("It is high time") will be produced and distributed to all Arab states. ARLO has also produced a pilot series of a T.V. programme for neo-literate women. These series are directed at literacy learners, the educated, policy-makers and the public in general.

> **"The main objective in creating public awareness is to develop an atmosphere of positive attitudes towards the problem of illiteracy as a cultural problem and the need to tackle and combat it. The target audiences are decision makers, the educated, the public at large as well as the learners themselves."**

In addition, ARLO plans to produce prototype visual informational and promotional materials to help concerned bodies and associations in the Arab states design and produce their materials. Many Arab states have reported that they will hold large scale meetings, T.V. interviews and produce promotional materials for ILY. An ILY poster and handout have already been created and distributed as well as booklets, films, postage stamps, press releases and radio programmes.



Illiteracy among Seniors

ONE VOICE, Seniors Network (Canada) has published two reports on the problem of illiteracy among seniors.

- **Illiteracy and Older Canadians: An Unrecognized Problem — Literature Review**
- **Illiteracy and Older Canadians: An Unrecognized Problem — Summary Report**

For more information:

ONE VOICE,
Seniors Network (Canada)
350 Sparks, Suite 901
Ottawa, Ont.
Canada K1R 7S8
(613) 238-7624

Call for Press Briefings on Literacy

Members of the Media who met in Paris in May 1989 at Unesco headquarters called for the creation of a system for regular press briefings on the global literacy situation. A sort of "Literacy Watch" has been proposed which would function in the same way that environmental briefings now work. The Panos Institute, which organizes similar briefings for their work on the environment and Aids issues, was cited as a model.

For further information contact:

Peter Calamai
Southam News
986 National Press Building
Washington D.C.
20045-2199 USA

Soviet Union - United States "Space-bridge on literacy"

A proposal for a learner-to-learner live television hook-up via satellite was heard at the Media Colloquium which met in Paris in May, 1989.

Plans were made to investigate the possibility of satellite linkage between literacy groups in parts of the United States with learners in the USSR in much the same way as peace groups have been doing for several years. Prof. Yegorov of the USSR State Committee for Television and Radio Broadcasting and James Duffy, President of Capital Cities ABC Television are leading the study.

NATIONAL CONVENTION ON WOMEN AND LITERACY

The "All India Committee for the Eradication of Female Illiteracy" is holding a National Convention on Women and Literacy on August 10-11, 1989 in New Delhi in collaboration with the Ministry of Human Resource Development. The theme of the convention will be "Women, Literacy and Empowerment". The objectives are to evolve a concrete action programme in the field of women and literacy. It is hoped that this convention will strengthen the literacy structures for women in India.

> *"...We made the mistake, we still make the mistake, of confusing illiteracy with ignorance. We dealt with you as wise parents with foolish children. I think that was wrong."*
>
> **Peter Abrahams, The View from Coyaba, 1985**

GREAT DEBATE

THE ONGOING DEBATE....

> **"It is more important to teach people better agriculture and village hygiene than to take time teaching them to read. When they are better fed and in better health, then literacy campaigns can be started."**

THE GREAT DEBATE about literacy in the Arab Region began in the early seventies. It resulted in an Arab concept of literacy and is based on the belief that: "the real illiteracy is the illiteracy of society as a whole. Illiteracy is the result and cause of social development." The issues at hand are the Arab concepts on illiteracy as well as the adopted approaches. ILY will be an opportunity for promoting a debate about literacy at the national level.

Hashim Abu Zied Elsafi, ARLO, Iraq, Indira Koithara, India ITFL Office, a Literacy Learner with her child at a literacy centre in Mombasa Kenya (4th ITFL meeting)

Beginning in 1989 through 1991 the Arab Regional Literacy Organization (ARLO) plans to stimulate debate on "Cultural Literacy" through:

- a symposium on the role of popular arts in the comprehensive confrontation of illiteracy
- a panel of experts on the state of NGOs active in adult education
- a seminar on the concepts of literacy and adult education
- a workshop for educationally concerned media people on the mobilization of public opinion as a means of solving the illiteracy problem
- a field study to evaluate the practice of the comprehensive literacy campaigns

ARLO will guarantee an opportunity for active participation in these events to any interested Arab literacy and adult education departments and NGOs.

> **"Some of the consequences of literacy may be negative and even unavoidable; but when not deliberately abused, literacy is positive and potent, literacy can not wait."**

RESEARCH

Major Research Conference Planned for 1990

The Literacy Research Center of the University of Pennsylvania has announced plans to hold an international conference called "World Literacy in the Year 2000: Research and Policy Dimensions" October 4 - 7, 1990 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA.

The conference, which is by invitation only, is focused on narrowing the gap between literacy researchers and policy makers. Some 50 - 60 literacy researchers and policy makers will be invited and the proceedings will be published as a special issue of the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science.*

The themes are:

Global literacy for the year 2000: myths and realities

•

Information gaps between policy and research

•

Where and how to target literacy efforts

•

Linkages, collaboration and communication

•

Imagining literacy in the year 2000

For further information:

Daniel A. Wagner
Literacy Research Centre
Graduate School of Education
3700 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104 - 6216
USA

ITFL PUBLICATIONS

The reports from the first two meetings of the ITFL: International Literacy Year: Beginning to Act and the International Literacy Year 1990: Building the Momentum, are out of print.

Available Reports:

Minutes: The Third Meeting of the ITFL, Paris, France, December, 1988 (English & French)

Report of the Fourth Meeting of the ITFL, Mombasa, Kenya, April, 1989 (English)

Report of the International Media Colloquium on Literacy, Paris, France, May 1989 (English & French)

There is a charge of $5.00 U.S. per copy for postage and handling for each report. Cheques should be made payable to the **International Council for Adult Education.**

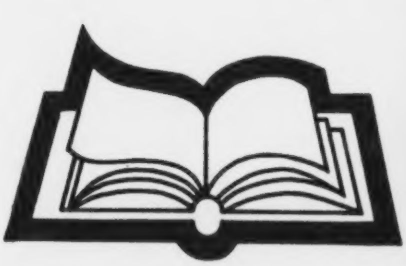
Big Push Needed for September 8

Continued from page 1

We all need time to relax and congratulate each other for the work which has been done so far.

What are you doing?

- In Montreal, Canada learners are meeting at the City Hall to sign the official Visitor's Book. Montreal is also launching the Book Voyage Project in Quebec.
- In Japan the Unesco Learning Centres are holding a world conference which will allow representatives from the Centres to meet and produce an action plan for future work.
- In Leicestershire, England an exhibition of world-wide literacy materials is planned for September 8.
- In Toronto, Canada, a gala play on the subject of literacy is being launched as a fundraising event for a local literacy organization.



ITFL ACTIVITIES

The International Task Force of Literacy (ITFL) is a coalition of regional and world-wide international non-governmental organizations to mobilize and stimulate activities of non-governmental organizations prior to, during and after the International Literacy Year 1990 (ILY).

TORONTO OFFICE

- The illiteracy problem's profile is being raised and general public awareness is growing rapidly. Many people are showing an interest in International Literacy Year and the Task Force. Last month the Toronto ITFL coordinating office received about 150 letters and more than 100 phone calls. We are getting not just general information requests but more and more specific inquiries/ requests from a variety of organizations and individuals, such as requests for speakers/panels/support for conferences/workshops on literacy, inquiries on specific projects/activities in different parts of the world, inquiries on employment and volunteer opportunities and requests for ILY/ITFL publications.

- **A welcome to new ITFL members:**

International Community Education Association
Headquarters: Coventry, England

International Publishers Association
Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland

World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts
Headquarters: London, England

World Federation of Trade Unions
Headquarters: Prague, Czecoslovakia

For more information on the activities of the Toronto office please contact:

International Task Force on Literacy
Coordinating Office
c/o ICAE
720 Bathurst Street, Ste. 500
Toronto, Ontario Canada M5S 2R4
Telephone: (416) 588-1211
Fax: (416) 588-5725
Telex: 06-986766 TOR

S.A./INDIA OFFICE

- Plans are underway for the 5th ITFL meeting to be held October 2-7 in New Delhi. The two main objectives are: to finalize review of plans for 1990 and to highlight activities and plans in South Asia region. The Indian Prime Minister, H. E. Rajiv Gandhi, is expected to open the ITFL meeting.

- The most famous singer in India, Ms. Lata Mangeshkar, will do a charity concert for the literacy cause on October 2, 1989, in New Delhi.

- ILY was one of the issues of the Wardha Conference on "Making Literacy a People's Movement". Indira and Lalita were able to talk to some 60 NGO representatives on this occasion.

- In New Delhi a two-day workshop is being planned to bring together NGOs interested in the Book Voyage Project. The objective is to develop a common approach for encouraging learners in sharing of their thoughts and views. Letters have already been sent to a large number of NGOs across the country explaining the concept and requesting cooperation, participation and suggestions.

- The India office has been working with the media organizations in India to develop public awareness programmes. The "All India Radio" has broadcast three programmes on Literacy at the national level since April 1989. A TV report on literacy is now ready and it is hoped that the TV Broadcasting Authority, Doordarshan, will carry it as a regular insert.

For more information on the activities of the S.A./India office please contact:

International Task Force on Literacy
South Asian/India Office
c/o Indian Adult Education Association
17-B Indraprastha Marg
New Delhi - 1100002 India
Tel: 331-9282
Cable: ADEO ASSO NEW DELHI

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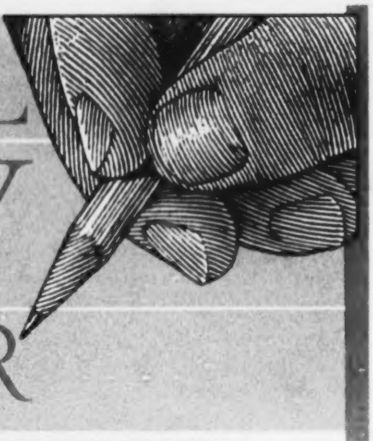


Book Voyage Agreement Highlights Final ITFL Planning Meeting

Sixty-three ITFL member representatives met in New Delhi, October 2-7 to discuss plans for ILY 1990. The session opened with a traditional candle lighting ceremony.

Sam Pitroda and Indira Koithara at the candle lighting ceremony.

Sam G. Pitroda, PM Rajiv Ghandi's flamboyant Director of Technology Missions, listed his frustrations with the literacy movement in India and elsewhere. He pointed out that "the efforts which are being made to combat illiteracy are not nearly large enough in scope" and also noted that the same people always meet to talk but not enough action takes place.

The concept of the **Book Voyage** generated a great deal of enthusiasm among the participants. The idea is to circulate a book to literacy centres around the world and to have people who have recently become literate write their messages of hope inside to share with others. The Book Voyage will be officially launched in Bangkok, Thailand on January 12, 1990 as the central ceremony of the People's Launch of International Literacy Year. Learners will figure prominently in both the launch of the book and its return to the United Nations headquarters on December 10, 1990. Other important agreements reached were: the importance of ITFL's focus on the role of women and literacy, the need for literacy organizations to begin reporting true statistics on local literacy situations, the need for closer work with the media, the need to shift government spending from military purposes to social programmes, the unique and critical role which NGOs play in literacy and the need to stop current spending declines on women's programmes.

Generous hospitality and a high degree of commitment were noted on the part of the National Literacy Mission. Unicef's financial support and their participation on the "Education for All" panel was greatly appreciated.

PUBLIC AWARENESS

Newsletter in Eight Languages

Thanks to the generous volunteer efforts of various literacy and ITFL members the ITFL Newsletter which is now published in English, French and Spanish, will soon be appearing in Chinese, Hindi, Urdu, Bengali and Arabic. This means that for the first time a large portion of the practitioners in those parts of the world where the need is greatest will soon have news available to them. Keep those articles coming!

Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal has graciously agreed to act as Patron of the International Literacy Year in the United Kingdom.

Observance of September 8

The Dhaka Ahsania Mission in Bangladesh observed International Literacy Day with:

A Literacy Procession

A colourful literacy procession of banners and music paraded the city streets. Many NGOs and social welfare organizations participated in the procession by distributing leaflets with literacy messages to the general public. The procession created great enthusiasm among the many observers.

Literacy procession organised in Bangladesh on 8th September, 1989.

A Seminar on International Literacy Day

A seminar on "International Literacy Day" was held at the Dhaka Ahsania Mission. Many government officials, eminent educators and social workers participated in the discussions. Mr. Kazi Rafiqul Alam of the Dhaka Ahsania Mission urged, all concerned to extend their cooperation and full support to eradicate illiteracy in Bangladesh by the year 2000.

Discussions — "Role of Women in Literacy Programmes"

A large number of women from all walks of life participated in discussions at the Literacy Office to promote the broader participation of women in implementing literacy programmes. Mrs. Gul Afroz Mahbook, the Director of the Department of Women's Affairs, was in attendance.

Throughout the country NGOs and voluntary organizations organized different programmes such as seminars, symposiums, workshops, press briefings and literacy competitions.

A Time and Space for Reading

In order to encourage people to read more, the International Publishers Association (IPA) has urged its members to call for the installation of a "readers' corner" in popular meeting places: town halls, railway stations, airports, museums, hospitals etc. It is hoped that with more frequent contact with books, a greater taste for reading may be developed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The graphic on the covering page of the previous issue of the Newsletter was designed by Gail Geltner, a graphic designer from Toronto, Canada.

STRENGTHENING STRUCTURES

Bringing Together Developed and Developing Countries

The International Publishers Association (IPA) has proposed "twinnings" between the literacy associations of developed countries and those in developing countries. The aim of these twinnings is to institute exchanges of programmes, suggestions and projects for ILY, set up contacts between associations for professional training, publications, etc. and discuss specific issues. The details of the proposal to establish such twinnings will be discussed in November 1989.

World Organization of Scout Movement

A "Literacy Seminar" is being organized in Accra, Ghana from November 27-December 02, 1989. The aim of the seminar is to motivate and train Scout and Unesco Club Leaders to undertake literacy programmes.

For more information contact:

World Organization of the Scout
Movement
Box 241
1211 Geneva 4
Switzerland

Illustration: Pippa Smyth

Voices

New Writers for New Readers

The Lower Mainland Society for Literacy and Employment is now publishing *Voices* It is a learner-produced magazine which is divided into four sections and encourages the development of true learner centred programmes:

- **New Writers/First Words** which contains selections with the easiest readability
- **Transitions/Later Writings** is from students further along in the writing process and perhaps more difficult in its readability
- **Work/Notes** is designed to instruct and motivate beginning writers and to offer support for the writing process.
- **Theory/Practice** is a forum for sharing experiences, ideas and views.

To subscribe to *Voices* contact:

Voices, Lower Mainland Society
for Literacy and Employment
14525 110A Avenue
Surrey, British Columbia V3R 2B4 Canada

GREAT DEBATE

Bilingualism and Biliteracy

The adult education field needs to do more to address the needs of non-native speakers of English who have limited literacy skills in their first language. English literacy classes are not designed to accommodate the literacy needs of these students; their reliance on printed text and grammatical explanations of language make them inaccessible to non-literate learners. These classes frequently don't take into account learners' unfamiliarity with certain vocabulary and non-standard grammatical constructions.

> *By teaching students to read in their native language we draw on their strengths and the knowledge already learned...*

On May 10, 1989 El Barrio Popular Education Programme, the Community Development Agency, and The Literacy Assistance Center held a panel discussion on Native Language Literacy. The goal of the panel was to provide funders and programme managers with information on the educational needs of non-literate second-language learners and to describe programme models that try to meet these needs.

By teaching students to read in their native language we draw on their strengths and the knowledge already learned and we assist them in formulating and extending reading strategies in English. If students learn strategies in both languages, the result will be self-confident readers who are free to concentrate on the more critical aspects of reading.

Dan Rabideau,
Literacy Assistance Center,
USA.

Language and POWER

When working with learners studying English as a Second Language, regardless of the approach taken, teachers should never underestimate the relationship between language and power. This relationship is magnified when students come from situations in which the language of the people differs from the language of those in power. Because the students are adults who bring diverse attitudes and experiences to the classroom, the necessity to learn English coupled with the need to master literacy skills has an emotional charge whether or not the teacher realizes it. For this reason, teachers must be sensitive to what learning to read as an adult means to the learner as well as what it means to learn English.

Klaudia Rivera

In My Past

In my past:
I was free with the knowledge of
how to use my language. I was not
free to write everything that was in
my mind.

In my present:
I am free to write everything
that is in my mind, but I am
not free in using English.

In my own language I can fly.
In English I hardly
crawl in my writing.
Sometimes I feel like a fish
which at any moment will drown.

I just wish to learn how to swim
or fly in English, also.

Sonia Bartek, *Voices, New Writers for New Readers*

This newsletter is partially financed by CIDA, SIDA and NORAD.

Functional Literacy Seminar

The 17th Annual National Functional Literacy Seminar was held from October 2-8, 1989 at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. The theme was "Improving the Effectiveness of Adult Literacy Education for Development in Nigeria". The seminar was officially opened on Tuesday, October 3, by the Minister of Education, Professor Jibril Aminu. For a copy of the final report and more information contact:

Michael Omolewa
Department of Adult Education
University of Ibadan
Ibadan, Nigeria

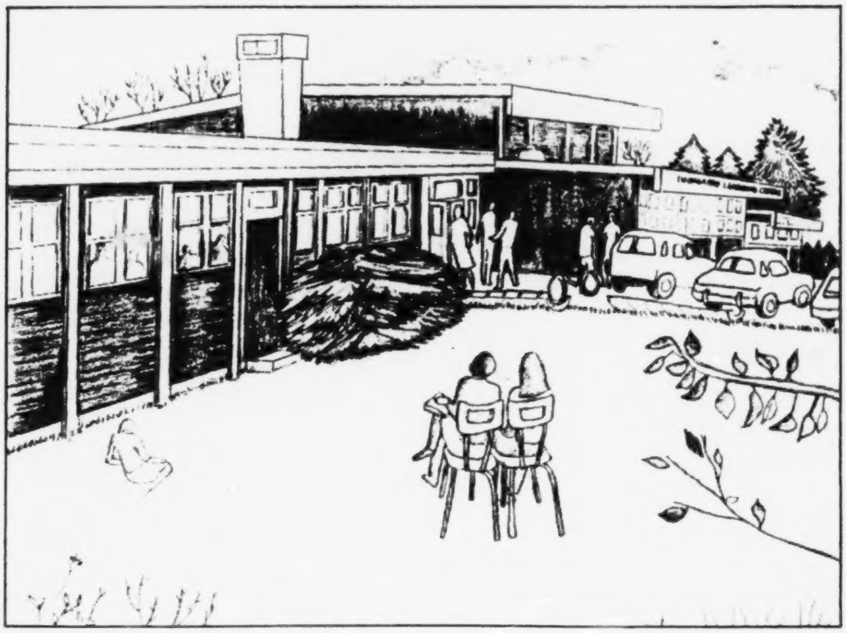
Learner's Corner

Excerpts from **Illiterate No More**, by Yusuf Kassam:

"You despise yourself because you feel oppressed as a result of illiteracy and ignorance."
Kondo M. Kawambwa, Dar es Salaam

"I will continue to learn even after my retirement."
Nderingo Jakob, Moshi

"The word 'education' used to depress my spirits."
Idrisa Abubakari, Dar es Salaam



Invergarry Learning Centre Illustration: Pippa Smyth

Voices

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A Contribution to ILY

A dossier entitled "Evaluation Instruments for Literacy Programmes" has been published by the German Foundation for International Development. The dossier provides information on how to evaluate crucial aspects of literacy programmes. It presents a variety of monitoring systems and instruments which have been designed by literacy workers to generate evaluation information. The dossier offers a chapter on how to design a system of evaluation and monitoring for literacy and post-literacy programmes, two instruments for baseline surveys, a collection of management information of large-scale literacy campaigns in Southern Africa, and radio-listening report forms.

This book can be ordered free of charge from:

German Foundation for International Development
Education, Science and Documentation Centre
Hans-Boeckler-Str.
5300 Bonn 3
(indicate the code DOK 1541 c/a when ordering)

ITFL ACTIVITIES

The International Task Force on Literacy (ITFL) is a coalition of regional and world-wide international non-governmental organizations to mobilize and stimulate activities of non-governmental organizations prior to, during and after the International Literacy Year 1990 (ILY).

The two coordinating offices worked together over the past months to organize the Fifth Meeting of the ITFL, which was held in New Delhi, India, October 02-07, 1989. Some highlights of the program were:

- candle lighting ceremony
- updates from the Toronto and South Asian/India coordinating offices
- progress reports were distributed by ITFL member organizations
- a panel on Media involvement in ILY
- an evening of Indian dances
- a full session on "Women and Literacy — Regional Issues and Global Strategies"
- an NGO call for action on literacy in the 1990s was produced
- a panel discussion on the ITFL "roundtable" which will be held at the March 1990 World Conference on Education for All in Bangkok, Thailand
- discussions on the creation of a South Asian literacy network and strengthening literacy structures in that region as well as the future direction of the South Asian/India coordinating office
- animated discussions on the launching of the **Book Voyage** which will take place in January 1990, Bangkok, Thailand
- study visits were arranged to six literacy centres in New Delhi where discussions with learners took place and some simple but powerful street theatre productions on the subject of literacy were performed
- discussions on a plan for the "People's Launch of ILY" during the ICAE General Assembly of Adult Education which will be held in Bangkok, Thailand, January 8-18, 1990
- ITFL plan of activities and next steps
- a press conference at the Indian Press Club with ITFL representatives form the different regions of the world
- a plan to evaluate the impact of the ITFL

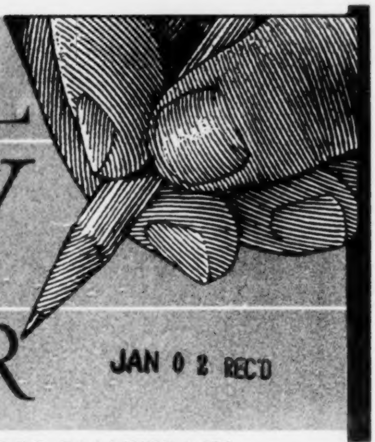
A summary report on the meeting will be available in December 1989 and a full report will be available in January 1990 from:

International Task Force on Literacy
Coordinating Office
c/o ICAE
720 Bathurst Street, Ste. 500
Toronto, Ontario Canada M5S 2R4
Telephone: (416) 588-1211
Fax: (416) 588-5725
Telex: 06-986766 TOR

or

International Task Force on Literacy
South Asian/India Office
c/o Indian Adult Education Association
17-B Indraprastha Marg
New Delhi - 1100002 India
Tel: 331-9282
Cable: ADEO ASSO NEW DELHI
Fax: 35-33-18

1990 INTERNATIONAL LITERACY YEAR

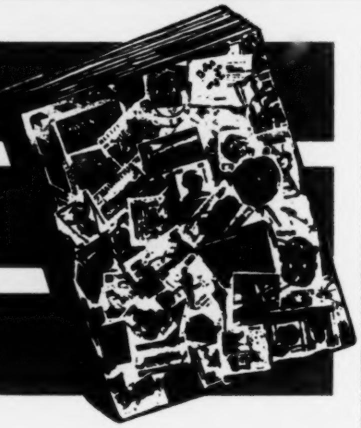


JAN 0 2 REC'D

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL TASK FORCE ON LITERACY

Number 7, December 1989

WORDS FREE ME



he Book Voyage is an international project in which a series of books will travel from literacy centre to literacy centre, from village to village and from country to country around the world during the United Nations' International Literacy Year. People who have recently learned to read and write will write, draw or express their messages in their own languages to share with others around the world. The final project outcome will be national and international books.

◆

This international project of the International Task Force on Literacy (ITFL) provides a unique opportunity for the voices of millions of new literate people to be heard globally. The project was borne out of a collective decision made by a coalition of regional and world-wide international non-governmental organizations to stimulate and mobilize activities during and after the International Literacy Year 1990.

The purposes of the Book Voyage are:

1. To involve learners themselves in the International Literacy Year.
2. To raise public awareness.
3. To build bridges between learners in industrialised countries and non-industrialised countries.

The key is the total involvement of learners.

An international launching of the Book Voyage will take place in Bangkok on January 12, 1990 at the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) World Assembly. The launching event will include a formal ceremony where a symbolic book will be signed by several learners from other countries, the Director-General of Unesco as well as Her Royal Highness the Crown Princess Mahachakri of Thailand.

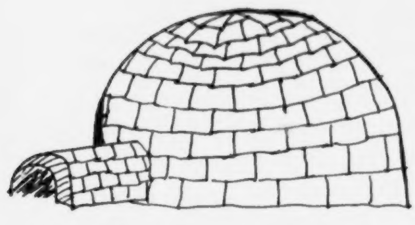
At the end of the year, a giant book with pages from all over the world will be translated into other major languages and will be presented to the Secretary-General of the United Nations in a ceremony at the UN Headquarters in New York on International Human Rights Day, December 10, 1990.

A brochure featuring:

- How to get started: the design is yours
- How to Launch: organize an event
- How to Launch Your Book
- Why Do It?
- Content: use free expression
- Calendar: important dates to remember
- Key Regional Contacts
- Suggestions: how to use your book

is now available at the Toronto Secretariat and will be sent out to all participating organizations within the next few days.

PUBLIC AWARENESS



Alaska Celebration

The Literacy Council of Alaska celebrated International Literacy Day, September 8, with an informal luncheon. An official proclamation was signed by Mayor Juanita Helms designating it as Literacy Day in the Fairbanks North Star Borough. The guest of honour, Caroline MacLachland, Director of Stowe Hill Literacy Centre in Gwent, Wales, visited the area for two weeks and adult literacy was the theme of her numerous appearances.

Pacific Celebration

The literacy school of the Young Women's Christian Association of Papua, New Guinea celebrated September 8 with an "Open Day". Relatives and friends of the students were invited to view the training centre and to see some of the students' work. All the students were presented with special literacy certificates, a note pad, ruler, pen and eraser.

Literacy is a Health Issue

A study by Frontier College, Toronto, and the Ontario Public Health Association showed that four times as many people with reading problems tend to rate their health as fair or poor than people with university educations said Mary Breen, a Peterborough reading consultant. The 5 million people in Canada with reading problems get sick more often and die younger than good readers.

"People misinterpret doctor's instructions and misread the labels on prescription bottles. These mistakes can be fatal. Four million Canadians read at a grade eight level or less and have trouble understanding written medical information. Dangerous mistakes are made in preparing baby formula." Literacy is a health issue. People with very limited reading skills don't get the information they need about work safety, public health, food preparation and being a parent," Breen commented.

All but four of the 190 health pamphlets studied by a group of Montreal pharmacists were written for people with an education above Grade 8.

Breen suggested more programmes to teach reading and more attention to simple clear writing will help to alleviate the problem.

John O'Leary of Frontier College said most information about alcohol and drug abuse, AIDS and child care is written exclusively for well-educated people whose first language is English.

"The federal government is the worst offender," he said. "This stuff is written by well-meaning people with Ph.D.'s or Masters degrees in social work and they just don't know how to say things clearly."

A Stranger Called Education

It is 4:00 p.m. under a still glaring October sun. The setting is a plaza in Tilak Vihar, New Delhi, crowded with people, vendors and camel-carts. It is a resettlement community for victims (mostly women and children) of the 1984 violence which erupted after Indira Gandhi's assassination. In crowded apartment complexes, families live in one-room units, many without doors or dividers.

A street theatre production, performed by ten students from the Hansraj Model Secondary School is about to begin. The stage is extremely simple: no costumes just plain school uniforms. One small aluminium pipe is the only prop to be used.

The story is an account of a man who comes into the city of Delhi for the first time. As he does not read nor write, he experiences a lot of difficulties: a policeman accosts him for loitering when he is simply only confused about which way to go; the bus conductor cheats him; he is slapped for asking directions. He finally finds discovers that he is in the wrong city altogether.

Disheartened, he wanders around the streets until he meets a stranger called Education who begins to laugh at him. Annoyed, the man asks the stranger to tell him the joke. "No one," according to Education, can survive without me and my support. Beware, for one day you shall fall into the pit of unawareness." The man spurns Education's help, but before

Continued...

STRENGTHENING STRUCTURES

Young Specialists in Literacy Work

The International Union of Students is on the second chapter of their international project on the training of young specialists in literacy work. This inter-NGO project, which was held in Bangkok, Thailand from November 20 to December 04, 1989 was in co-operation with the Asian Students' Association and the Students' Federation of Thailand and was assisted by Unesco. Its intention was to gather forty youths and student leaders from different political, cultural and religious situations, representing different NGOs and movements.

The main objectives were:

- to prepare youth and student leaders to plan, draft and run literacy projects
- to provide reliable information on factors affecting literacy and their social, cultural and historical basis
- to describe the main characteristics of Asian illiteracy and literacy actions
- to present the work of Unesco and other agencies, the NGO community, and the programme for International Literacy Year
- to discuss possible youth and student co-operation on literacy in the region, and formulate some follow-up ideas
- to become acquainted with national literacy projects, to hold field visits, lectures, debates and training

For more information contact:

International Union of
Students
17th November Street
110 01 Prague 01
Czechoslovakia

Pacific Encouragement for ILY

The Goroka Literacy Group in Papua, New Guinea held a literacy seminar on October 21. As well as raising public awareness of the literacy issue, the seminar encouraged people to start more literacy programmes and to share their literacy skills. It also encouraged people to think about ways in which they could make contributions to ILY. This women's group also hopes to begin literacy programmes in local prisons.

For more information contact:

Goroka Literacy Group,
Young Women's Christian
Association,
P.O. Box 636, Goroka,
Papua, New Guinea

* * *

PUBLIC AWARENESS *Continued*

A Stranger Called Education

(cont'd.)

long he does fall into a deep pit from which he cannot climb out. He calls for help but there is no one to help him. Eventually he realizes the value of literacy, seeks the help of Education and is able to climb out of the pit into the world again.

The play lasts for only 15 minutes and ends with a song which calls for immediate action. It is short, but the message is very powerful.

This play was performed for the participants of the Fifth ITFL meeting in India, October, 1989.

LEARNERS CORNER

Hell in My Classroom

I was scared to go back to School. I did want to go to a college in Surrey, but the test stopped me. If you want me to get the course noticed by the government, let me write a letter to them.

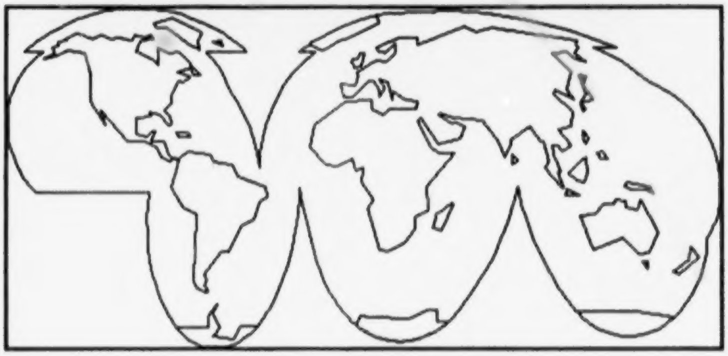
I was pushed through school. Sometimes I am last with my schooling because the reading was not important to them. So I was a Joe-boy in school. That is why I am going to school now. I did not learn in the regular system. I was like a retard in my school. It was like hell in my classroom. Some did learn and some did not.

—Arthur Siemens

Voices, New Readers for New Writers

GREAT DEBATE

LITERACY DEBATE BOGGED DOWN



AT THE FIFTH meeting of the International Task Force on Literacy, which was held in New Delhi from October 2-7, Mr. Sam Pitroda, advisor to the Prime Minister on Technology Missions expressed frustration with the literacy debate. He found that all discussions on literacy involved the same people, thereby making it a situation where the "preacher is preaching to the priest".

He mentioned that it was time to stop convincing those already converted and to move into the area of action.

He felt that more needed to be achieved "vertically" rather than "horizontally". So far, he has not been able to sell literacy as a process as it suffers from extreme compartmentalization. Improving literacy among people in the primary school system is not enough.

According to Pitroda, although there was much talk of a mass movement in literacy, "We have yet to see a movement of some sort."

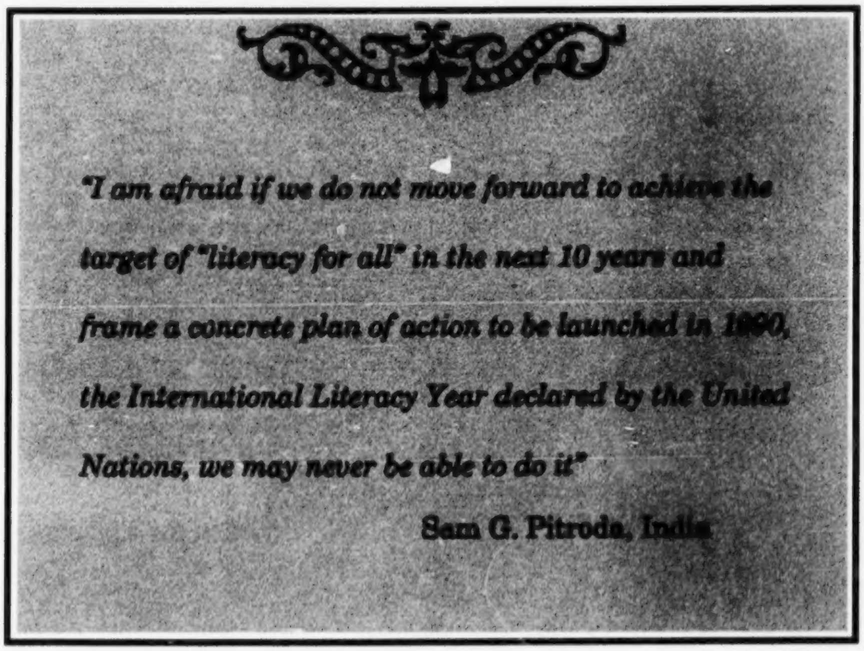
"How do we create a mass movement in literacy? If we don't achieve our literacy goals in the next 10 years, we may never achieve them."

Resources like money, manpower and management were not being put to use where they are most needed, he said. Hurdles such as these will have to be overcome if the international literacy mission is to succeed. "Help us; help us, so we can plan to implement something instead of planning for your next Task Force meeting.

He did, however, express confidence in the team heading the literacy "mission" saying it consisted of people who were dedicated, committed and concerned and willing to put in long hours.

The question of literacy is particularly worrisome as the field is very large and the mission directors have yet to feel the pulse of the situation in order to find out what is actually happening.

Indian Post: October 3, 1989



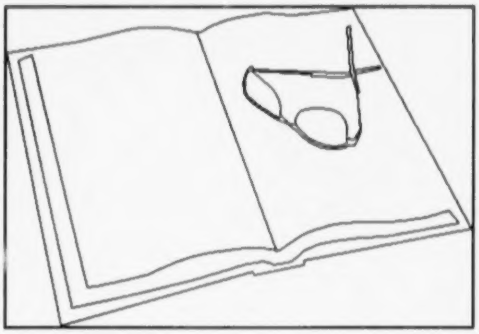
"I am afraid if we do not move forward to achieve the target of "literacy for all" in the next 10 years and frame a concrete plan of action to be launched in 1990, the International Literacy Year declared by the United Nations, we may never be able to do it"

Sam G. Pitroda, India

RESEARCH

Evaluation of Literacy Needs in Caribbean

The evaluation project entitled *National Experiences of Literacy for the Projection of Educational Policies and National Literacy Strategies* for Latin America and the Caribbean (contracted by UNESCO) was completed this October. The evaluation was carried out by the Caribbean Regional Council for Adult Education (CARCAE) in collaboration with other agencies involved in literacy. It was conducted in Dominica, Grenada, St.Lucia and St.Vincent, the Grenadines and Curacao.



◆

A national workshop was held to discuss the preliminary findings and to use the information to develop projects, projections and policies for the next 10 years. Subsequently a regional workshop was held in Barbados which was attended by representatives from both government and NGOs from five countries as well as representatives from JAMAL(Jamaica), Extra-Mural Programmes, University Linguistics Department and a Barbados Government representative. Participants examined the results of the evaluation and will present the report to the Inter-Governmental meeting on Literacy which is being held this month in Nicaragua.

Some of the findings coming out of the evaluation were:

1. There is no well stated or articulated government policy on literacy.
2. There is a need of a critical link between the formal school system and the increasing number of functionally literate.
3. There is a lack of public awareness about literacy.
4. There is a lack of research on literacy in the Caribbean.
5. There a need for training literacy teachers.
6. UNESCO and the other International Agencies need to see the Caribbean as a separate region so that Caribbean literacy problems receive separate and specific resources.
7. There is a need for a data base.

Literacy Mission
March 1989

WORDS

Words
Words
Words
Words
Words
Words
Feel them
Love Them
Write them
Be them

— Budd L. Hall
Toronto, Canada

> ***It is the humiliating nature of illiteracy that prompts so many non-readers to endure their handicap in silence, rather than seek help."***
>
> ***—Kenneth Jones***
> ***New World Outlook***

ITFL ACTIVITIES

The International Task Force on Literacy (ITFL) is a coalition of regional and world-wide international non-governmental organizations to mobilize and stimulate activities of non-governmental organizations prior to, during and after the International Literacy Year 1990 (ILY).

Toronto Office

- Plans are well underway for the international launch of the Book Voyage at the time of the ICAE World Assembly of Adult Education which will be held in Bangkok, Thailand, January,1990. A guide for the Book Voyage will be soon ready for wide distribution in three languages (English, French, Spanish).

- The NGO Call for Action on Literacy, which was produced at the last meeting of the Task Force, will also be announced at the World Assembly.

- Preparations for the ITFL "roundtable", which will be held at the March 1990 World Conference on Education for All in Bangkok, Thailand, is underway.

- Pat Rodney has recently joined the Co-ordinating Office as Programme Coordinator.

- A welcome to new ITFL member:

  Movimento Per Un Mondo Migliore
  (Movement for a Better World)
  Headquarters: Roma, Italy

- **ITFL Publications**
  The reports from the first two meetings of the ITFL: International Literacy Year: Beginning to Act and the International Literacy Year 1990: Building the Momentum, have been reprinted and are now available.

International Task Force on Literacy
Coordinating Office
c/o ICAE
720 Bathurst Street, Ste. 500
Toronto, Ontario Canada M5S 2R4
Telephone: (416) 588-1211
Fax: (416) 538-5725
Telex: 06-986766 TOR

South Asia/India Office

- The summary report on the Fifth Meeting of the ITFL which was held in New Delhi, October 2-7 is very near completion and should be available through the South Asia/India office by mid December. A full report will be available in January 1990.

- Preparations are being made for an "ILY 1990 Calender" which will contain the activities of various NGOs for International Literacy Year

- The shooting of the literacy film "Aakshar Ke Jharonke" (A Flow of Words) has begun and should be ready for screening in January 1990.

- Plans are underway for the launching of the Book Voyage in India. Letters have gone out to various states in India requesting that they go to the literacy centres in their areas and find get the learners' reactions to the book voyage as well as sending in success stores and critical analyses of literacy efforts throughout the country.

International Task Force on Literacy
South Asia/India Office
c/o Indian Adult Education Association
17-B Indraprastha Marg
New Delhi - 1100002 India
Tel: 331-9282
Cable: ADEO ASSO NEW DELHI
Fax: 35-33-18

1990 INTERNATIONAL LITERACY YEAR

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL TASK FORCE ON LITERACY

Number 8, February 1990

Literacy Messages to the World

OVER 600 DELEGATES from over 100 countries gathered in Bangkok, Thailand on January 12 for the People's Launch of the United Nation's International Literacy Year. The launch was held during the International Council for Adult Education's Fourth World Assembly.

This colourful open air festival began with the presentation of banners which were carried on to the stage by participants in their national dress, one from each of the seven regions of the world (North America, Caribbean, Arab States, Latin America, Asia and the South Pacific, Europe and Africa), containing a statement of that region's view on literacy. The statement was read aloud to the participants by a representative from each region.

After the banner presentation, to the music of a marching band, hundreds of balloons with messages tied to them which had been written by the regions were released in the air by each participant, sending a message to the world in support of literacy.

The festivities continued with the official opening of the ***Book Voyage***. Symbolic books, brought from all seven regions were paraded in a procession with a marching band on to the stage by learners and a representative of that particular region. The books were presented to Dame Nita Barrow, President of ICAE, who signed her name in each book. The six learners and one representative from each region then signed their names and inscribed their messages of hope to the world. The books were then returned to regional representatives to begin their official voyages.

The ceremony culminated with the Thai custom of the "lighting of the candle of knowledge". Each participant held a lighted candle as Dame Nita Barrow lighted a larger candle and read the ***NGO Call to Action***. This was followed by a fireworks display and a Thai folk dance.

Halimatou Traore, Mali, Dame Nita Barrow, Barbados, Musari Al-Rawi, Tunisia, Jong-Gon Hwang, Korea, Joyce Robinson, Jamaica

> ***"ILY challenges us to recognize immediate needs and calls us to action."***
>
> **Lalita Ramda**

PUBLIC AWARENESS

A National Response to Literacy

On January 23 the National Association for Mass Education (NAME), St. Vincent, West Indies, held a press conference to announce its programme for International Literacy Year. Excerpts from the conference were carried on radio and television as well as in the national newspapers.

A full programme was provided to the press for comments and suggestions that would enhance the overall package.

The programme theme is "Illiteracy: Our National Concern — A National Response" and will be made up of monthly sub-themes on the following topics:

January	Literacy and the International Situation
February	Literacy and the Media
March	Literacy and Women (with focus on children and family)
April	Literacy and the Environment
May	Literacy and the Worker (Labour Education)
June	Literacy and Culture
July	Literacy and Disaster Preparedness
August	Literacy and the Farmer
September	Literacy and Youth
October	Literacy and National Heroes/Independence
November	Literacy and the Community
December	Literacy and Human Rights — Right to Work

Some of the highlights of these monthly programmes will be panel discussions, workshops/seminars, radio and television quizzes, poster competitions, drama presentations, printing and use of posters, surveys, cultural shows, exhibitions, educational tours, use of the media, as well as marches and rallies.

For more information please contact:

Rebecca Jordan
Coordinator
NAME
P.O. Box 1443
St. Vincent, West Indies

European Plans for ILY

Scotland

The aims of the Scottish Community Education Council (SCEC) for International Literacy Year are:

- to raise public awareness on the extent of the problems related to low levels of literacy and adult basic education provisions available to meet the needs and
- to gather and disseminate information and practices on adult literacy.

Some planned activities are:

- publishing a handbook for employers on work-based education;
- highlighting literacy needs among young people;
- highlighting ILY at the annual ABE Organizer's Conference;
- production of a poster to raise awareness;
- seeking funds for a research proposal on literacy needs;
- production of press releases and statistics to highlight needs;
- proposals to Scottish television for the promotion of ILY, including an education debate;
- encouraging bookshops and publishers to support ILY through use of the logo on bookmarks;
- using local radio to highlight ILY.

Northern Ireland

A coordination committee functioning from the Regional Curriculum Base of the University of Ulster plans to:

- present sixteen local radio programmes representative of each region;
- produce support materials in folder form for use by students;
- request the library service to help set up parent activities to help children to read;
- hold a press conference with the British Minister of Education to launch ILY, basic education receptions hosted by various departments, a major conference on March 10 on "ABE and the Workplace" with representatives from major industrial and commercial enterprises and a calendar of events for Northern Ireland;
- set-up staff development projects at regional levels;
- ask local publishers to use literacy logo;
- host a cross-frontier meeting of representatives for ABE in Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic.

National Federation of Unesco Associations in Japan

The Federation will hold an international non-governmental forum on the theme of "Education for All" to commemorate International Literacy Year. The dates are June 23-28, 1990 and it will take place at the Nagoya International Centre, Nagoya, Japan.

For more information contact:

National Federation of Unesco
Association in Japan
c/o Shinjuku Centre Bld., 28F
P.O. Box 4004
25-1 Nishi-shinjuku 1
Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 163, Japan

STRENGTHENING STRUCTURES

LEARNER'S CORNER

"Please don't be a foreign country to the learners that you work for."

Robin Silverman, Toronto, Canada
Excerpt from speech made to the ICAE World Assembly in Bangkok, Thailand, January 1990

Learner Profiles

The following profiles were taken from interviews with learners who attended the 4th World Assembly, Bangkok, Thailand, January 8-18, 1990

■ **Clemence Registe** was born in 1932 in the Commonwealth of Dominica and is a self-employed mother of eleven. Most of her children now live abroad and she was not able to reply to their letters promptly as she had to depend on someone else to read them and write her replies. This inhibited both the children and herself from writing anything personal or important. This inability to read and write as well as a desire to keep accurate account of her money was what motivated her to learn to read and write.

Magdaleen Gathoni signs the Symbolic Book. Bangkok, Thailand

■ **Magdaleen Gathoni** was born in Kenya, East Africa. She was unable to attend school because her parents could not afford to pay the school fees. As an adult she started working as a helper in a medical training centre. She was overlooked for a promotion because she could not fill out the form required for her to attend the interview. She then decided to start attending adult education and literacy classes. She is now able to read and write and to speak English. She is also the chairperson of a women's group.

Self-Help and Literacy

SWANIRVAR BANGLADESH, a national private voluntary organization in a country where nearly 75% of the population is unable to read and write, discovered over the years that with motivation, planning and a coordinated approach, much could be achieved with scanty resources. Over the past decade, Swanirvar has helped in establishing some 10,000 literacy centres in various parts of the country. The average out-of-pocket expense has been about $7.50 per person per year. Many free contributions such as books, implements, accommodation and labour have been made.

Swanirvar's general approach is total development through self-reliance principles to all sections of society. Much of the work is done by and from within the community. Swanirvar does the initial motivational work and organizers five distinct socio-economic groups, namely, farmers, landless, women, youth and available vocational groups within the village who then form a village development committee with equitable representation from each group. The members of the village committee take charge of different developmental activities such as agricultural production, village infrastructure, cottage industries, education, health and family planning. A detailed survey is carried out, a village development plan is drawn up according to what the villagers themselves think should be done for their own development and then funds are collected from villagers weekly savings. Although these financial contributions are often not sufficient, the local initiatives usually stir enough interest amongst local government officials to induce them to support the programmes through materials and other types of assistance.

The needs of the landless and the women figure most prominently in Swanirvar sponsored development, literacy and family planning receive the highest priority. Literacy and skill development are seen as package programmes and short term loans are available for the landless through the Swanirvar credit scheme (about 70% of the beneficiaries are women). Various evaluations have indicated that literacy rates in Swanirvar villages are about twice that of the rest of Bangladesh. The community involvement in identifying its own development needs triggers maximum participation in planning and implementation.

The literacy classes follow a flexible schedule so that all students can attend. Besides informal instructions, standard text books are followed by both children and adults and after completion of a six month literacy course, adults receive skill training in such courses as animal husbandry, cane and bamboo work, sewing, weaving, carpentry, hairdressing. The non-formal and primary education at Swanirvar has traditionally looked at the needs beyond literacy and on the basis of community requirements.

Welcome

We would like to welcome two new funding partners to the ITFL:

- The Mott Foundation, United States
- Dai-Hyaku Friendship Foundation, Japan

We would also like to welcome two new members to the ITFL:

- International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW), Austria
- Ligue Internationale de l'Enseignement de l'Education et de la Culture Populaire, France

GREAT DEBATE

INCLUDED UNDER the **Great Debate** section of the ILY Newsletter No. 4, July 1989, the following statements were made:

To be literate is to become liberated from the constraints of dependency.
To be literate is to gain a voice...
To be literate is...to become self-assertive
To be literate is to become politically conscious...
Literacy makes people aware of their basic human rights.

These statements cause me much concern. First, the goals mentioned in the above statements are not likely to occur unless one teaches learners how to achieve these goals and most literacy programmes do not. It is incorrect to assume that these statements will be fulfilled merely through the achievement of literacy. There are many examples to illustrate why this is so. By themselves, then, these statements are not necessarily true. The outcome of these statements can be fulfilled through literacy education providing the education programmes make the effort to teach these as learning outcomes, and provide the political and social climate which will nourish these statements and will help to fulfil them.

Second, and related to the first point, becoming literate will not automatically free one from exploitation and oppression. Literacy has only the potential to do so. Sadly, there are many examples where new literates are still oppressed and only have propaganda to read. These two points are deeply philosophical and the original statements are not to be taken lightly or assumed to always be true.

James Draper
Ontario Institute for
Studies in Education
Toronto, Canada

"Illiteracy has to be combated because it is the enemy of the people, it is darkness, it makes people unreceptive to new ideas and change, it hinders development, it exposes people to brutal exploitation and oppression, and it is also an obstacle to people participating fully in economic, social and cultural activities."

Beyene Abraha, Addis Ababa,
Ethiopia

* * *

"Are we fully aware of and concerned about the often destructive potential of our literacy endeavours and the indirect, negative influences and repercussions on developmental processes which are apparent in phenomena like rural exodus, negligence of traditional skills and cultural heritages bound to non-written transfer?"

Hizen, Hor, Leumer, Nieman, 1983

* * *

"Literacy is not the end of education or even the beginning. It is only one of the means whereby men and women can be educated".

Kusmal Nanda Dondsena,
Orissa, India
Winner of the 1989 J. Roby Kidd
Award

Reminder

Our official launching of the **Book Voyage** was a huge success due to the participation of learners and adult educators who attended the 4th World Assembly of ICAE in Bangkok. What about doing something similar to launch your own books? The Thai celebration was very colourful and elaborate. Your ceremony however can be just as impressive by organizing it in your own special way. Please let us know when you plan to do your launch. If it has already happened let us know how successful it was. If some of you are still unaware about who your regional coordinators are, here are their names again:

Africa - Musa Njue Njiru, Kenya Institute of Education
South Asia - Indira Koithara, c/o Indian Adult Education Association
Arab States - Hashim Abu Zeid El Safi, Arab Regional Literacy & Adult Education Organization
Caribbean - Miriam Moulton-Campbell, c/o Organization of American States Office, Dominica
Latin America - César Picón, Naciones Unidas, El Salvador
Europe - Rosa Maria Falgas Casanovas, Federación de Asociación de Educación de Adultos, Spain
North America - Louise Miller, Regroupement des Groupes Populaires d'Alphabetisation du Quebec, Canada
- Elise Mennie, Movement for Canadian Literacy, Canada

* * *

Also we wish to welcome our new coordinator **Emilliana Afeaki** who is responsible for the South Pacific Region:

Emilliana Afeaki
Head, Continuing Education
The University of the South Pacific
P.O. Box 1168, Suva
Fiji
Telephone: 313900 Ext. 351
Cables: University, Suva
Telex: FJ2276
Fax: (679) 300482

International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW)

The theme of the 25th International Conference on Social Welfare will be "The Human Dimension of Local Development: Accepting the Challenge". It will be held in Marrakech, Morocco, June 24-29, 1990.

For further information write:

Ingird Gelinek, Secretary-General
International Council on Social Welfare
Koestlergasse 1/29
A-1060 Vienna, Austria

RESEARCH

The following publications are available through the Unesco Institute for Education, Hamburg

1. Functional Illiteracy in Industrialized Countries: An Analytical Bibliography
2. Functional Illiteracy and Literacy Provision in Developed Countries: The Case of the Federal Republic of Germany
3. Learning Strategies for Post-Literacy and Continuing Education in Mali, Niger, Senegal and Upper Volta
4. Learning Strategies for Post-Literacy and Continuing Education: A Cross-National Perspective
5. Learning Strategies for Post-Literacy and Continuing Education in Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania and United Kingdom
6. Learning Strategies for Post-Literacy and Continuing Education in China, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Thailand and Vietnam
7. Learning Strategies for Post-Literacy and Continuing Education in Brazil, Colombia, Jamaica and Venezuela
8. Handbook on Learning Strategies for Post-Literacy and Continuing Education

To obtain a copy please contact:

Unesco Institute for Education
Feldbrunnenstrasse 58
2000 Hamburg 13
Federal Republic of Germany

> ***"The object of research, like the object of the educational process, should be the liberation of human creative potential and the mobilization of human resources for the solution of social problems."***

The Golden Rule Award

The Bahá'i International Community and the International Council for Women are happy to announce the establishment of **The Golden Rule Award.** The award will be given annually to an organization or individual whose work has made an outstanding contribution toward the advancement of women.

In its first year, in recognition of the vital importance of International Literacy Year, 1990, the award, along with a $1,000.00 cash prize, will go to an outstanding grassroots literacy project with a focus on women and/or girls.

The criteria for the Golden Rule Award will be in accordance with the common goals of the collaborating organizations, namely:

- to promote equal rights and responsibilities for both men and women in all spheres by removing all forms of prejudice based on birth, race, sex, language or religion;
- to promote recognition and respect for human rights;
- to support all efforts to achieve a unifying peace;
- to encourage the integration of women in development and in decision-making bodies.

The recipient of the award will be announced at a reception in the Fall of 1990. *Deadline for Application:* June 30, 1990.

For further information please contact:
Nora El-Tobgy
The Golden Rule Award
866 United Nations Plaza
Suite 119
New York, N.Y. 10017 USA
Tel: (212) 486-0560
Fax: (212) 838-7027

International Community Education Association (ICEA)

The ICEA is hosting the first Asian regional conference on "Community Education for a Learning Society in the Context of Asian Heritage". It will be held at the International Youth Centre, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, September 17-20, 1990.

For more information contact:
International Community
Education Association
Britton Rd.
Coventry, England
CV2 4LF

Tell Us Your History

The city of Newcastle upon Tyne would like to invite entries from around the world for an exhibition on "The Right to Read". You are asked to write your page of history focusing on the need for reading and writing skills worldwide and why it matters to you or to someone you know to be able to read and write. Cash awards will be given to the entries deemed by our judges to be the most outstanding and unique. The awards will be used to promote further successful study.

For further information contact:

Diana Gray
Coordinator, International
Literacy Year in Newcastle
Heaton Education Centre
Trewhitt Road
Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 5DY,
United Kingdom

This newsletter is partially funded by CIDA, SIDA and NORAD

ITFL ACTIVITIES

The International Task Force on Literacy (ITFL) is a coalition of regional and world-wide international non-governmental organizations to mobilize and stimulate activities of non-governmental organizations prior to, during and after the International Literacy Year 1990 (ILY).

Toronto Office

- A special meeting of the ITFL was held in Paris, France February 6-7, 1990 to discuss the strategies of the three main NGO bodies, ITFL, Unesco NGO Standing Committee and Unicef NGO Consultation Committee on how best to organize and mobilize all the NGOs which will participate in the "Education for All" Conference to be held in Jomtien, Thailand, March 1990.

- **ITFL Publications**: There is a charge of $5.00 US for postage and handling for all copies and **must be pre-paid.**

  ITFL Posters and Pins: are available through the Toronto office. They are $5.00 US each. The **minimum** order is five and **must be pre-paid** (includes postage and handling)

- The international launch of the **Book Voyage** and the announcement of the **NGO Call to Action on Literacy** were made on January 12 at the International Council for Adult Education's World Assembly of Adult Education which was held in Bangkok, Thailand.

- Copies of the **NGO Call to Action** and a guide for the **Book Voyage** are available free of charge from your regional office.

- A memo regarding the launching of International Literacy Year, with guidelines and useful ideas for events, was prepared and widely distributed to our member organizations, newsletter subscribers, literacy workers and learners.

- Preparations for the ITFL "Roundtable" and an exhibition for the World Conference on Education for All are underway.

- This newsletter is **free of charge.** For copies in English and French please write the ITFL office in Toronto. For copies in Spanish please contact: Consejo de Educación de Adultos de America Latina, Correo 22, Casilla 6257, Santiago, Chile.

International Task Force on Literacy
Coordinating Office
c/o ICAE
720 Bathurst Street, Ste. 500
Toronto, Ontario Canada M5S 2R4
Telephone: (416) 588-1211
Fax: (416) 588-5725
Telex: 06-986766 TOR

South Asia/India Office

- Approximately two thousand women and children participated in a symbolic "Learner's March" organized by the South Asia office of the ITFL which was held in India on January 1. The March officially ushered in International Literacy Year and was followed by literacy plays put on by learners

- Two new literacy centres which 101 students have been admitted, have been opened in Sangli Apartments and Copernicus Marg, New Delhi as a result of joint efforts by the Task Force and the Naval Wive's Welfare Association

- The South Asia Task Force is sponsoring and initiating various cultural activities and competitions for the promotion of literacy among adults and children. These events will take place from January through June 1990 in many parts of India. They include:

  - poster competition
  - learner's conference
  - music competition
  - literacy fair
  - puppet shows
  - cultural concerts
  - filmets
  - television films
  - rallies
  - symposia on "Literacy as Mass Movement"
  - poetry competition
  - essay competition in Hindi and English on the topic: "A literate woman can make her child a more committed citizen"

For more detailed information on any of the following activities please contact Indira Koithara:

International Task Force on Literacy
South Asia/India Office
c/o Indian Adult Education Association
17-B Indraprastha Marg
New Delhi - 1100002 India
Tel: 331-9282
Cable: ADEO ASSO NEW DELHI
Fax: 35-33-18

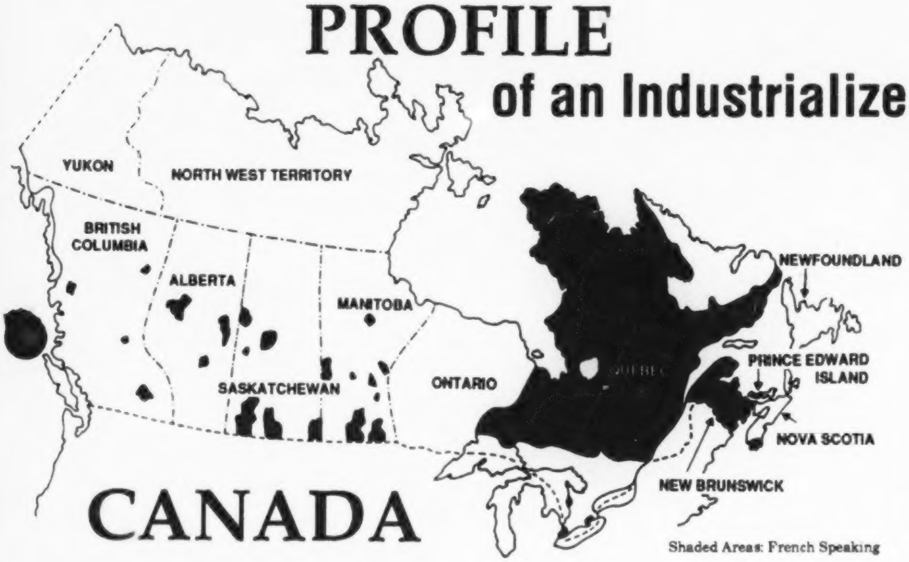
1990 INTERNATIONAL LITERACY YEAR

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL TASK FORCE ON LITERACY

Number 9, April 1990

PROFILE

of an Industrialized Country...



Shaded Areas: French Speaking

CANADA

ILLITERACY in industrialized countries had remained almost invisible for a long time. It is only recently that the magnitude of this problem started to draw considerable attention. People who are not literate and live in industrialized countries face even greater challenges of functioning in these societies which in recent years have become more technological.

In this issue, we would like to focus on Canada as a case study of our efforts towards understanding the problem of illiteracy in industrialized countries.

Canada has a population of over 25 million. It is a country with a multicultural heritage and two official languages English and French. Over one quarter of [illegible]e population speak French. The Native [illegible]eoples and Inuit (also called Eskimos) lived in this country long before it was known as Canada.

Canada is comprised of ten provinces (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario, British Columbia, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland, Manitoba, Alberta, Saskatchewan) and two territories (Yukon and Northwest).

Some facts about literacy in Canada

One recent study reveals that one in four Canadians is functionally illiterate, a term which indicates inability to read and write at basic levels of comprehension. (ref. Southam Literacy Survey) Illiteracy is a problem for those who were born in Canada as well as immigrants from all over the world. Literacy for socially disadvantaged groups such as the poor, women, native people, and people with disabilities are some of the major areas yet to be addressed.

How is the problem being addressed in Canada

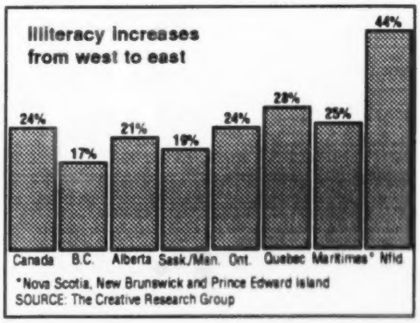
Several agencies and both governmental and non-governmental organizations are tackling this problem in different ways. It is impossible to feature all the programmes but we will highlight a cross section of these programmes.

Selected Programmes in Canada

Adult Literacy (specifically geared to adults with learning disability)
Learning Disabilities Association of North York
Contact: Jim Knight or Lorraine Fletcher
Tel: (416) 229-1680

Literacy Referral Service (for Metro Toronto residents)
Literacy Access Network provided by Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy
9 St. Joseph St., Ste. 310
Toronto, Ont. M4Y 1J6
Tel: (416) 961-5557

Continued on page 2



*Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island
SOURCE: The Creative Research Group

Editorial

Survey

We would like to express our appreciation to those of you who returned the Newsletter Questionnaire so diligently. Your comments are useful and informative and will ensure the coverage of topics which are of interest to you in future editions. The results of the questionnaire can be found in the "Research" section of this issue.

After receiving such inspiring feedback from our readers it is with deep regret that we inform you that due to serious financial constraints the Newsletter will now be published quarterly instead of bi-monthly. The next edition will be published in August of 1990. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause. If you wish to make a contribution towards the Newsletter and help us to continue its publication, please send donations in the name of the International Council for Adult Education which has charitable status and is able to issue tax receipts for all Canadian and American donations (please clearly indicate that your donation is for the ITFL Newsletter).

Profiles

Many of you suggested that we include an in-depth country and person profile. In this issue we have profiled Canada and have chosen a woman from southern Ontario as our person profile. The two countries which will be profiled in the next edition will be Zambia and Ireland. If you would like to see your country included in the profile please send us information on literacy activities which are taking place as well as someone you feel should be given special recognition for their outstanding work in the field of literacy.

Success Stories

Out of the questionnaire there also came a high demand for literacy success stories. We have highlighted two small success stories on two brothers and a newly literate woman from the United States in this issue.

Book Voyage

All future issues of the Newsletter will carry an update on the worldwide Book Voyage project. Please send us information about how the project is going in your country and/or region.

Thank you again for your enthusiasm, interest and invaluable support.

Darlene E. Owens, Editor

Literacy for Women

In Trinidad and Tobago as part of an ILY "Literacy for Women" project, the Network of Non-Governmental Organizations for the Advancement of Women recently held a Literacy Workshop for a wide range of participants who are involved in literacy work.

Workshop participants learned about NGO roles in Trinidad and Tobago. They are: a) to educate and inform; b) to provide useful communication between NGOs; c) to develop strategies for the advancement of women and; d) to educate government about the function of NGOs.

From the workshop they defined literacy as "the ability to read and write in Standard English as well as the ability to do mathematical calculations. While the official Trinidad and Tobago definition states that a literate is one who has had 6 years of primary schooling.

The answer to the question "Why should we speak and write in Standard English when we are a Caribbean island and our own particular form of dialect?" was addressed and the conclusion was that: "The world is a global village. It writes and speaks Standard English. What we in the Caribbean need to do is to develop our ability to switch from our indigenous dialects to Standard English with ease".

For a copy of the very interesting and complete report on this workshop please write to:

Dawn Mahailia Riley
c/o #18, Bath Street
Port of Spain
Trinidad, West Indies

From Grass Roots to Green Papers

The Australian Council for Adult Literacy has for worldwide distribution a video taped report of its 13th National Conference which was held in August 18-21, 1989 in Hobart, Tasmania.

The video called "From Grass Roots to Green Papers" presents a summary of their perspectives, issues and conflicts that are shared in the practice and provision of adult literacy and basic education. It has a cast of literacy students, tutors, coordinators, key community figures and politicians.

Its distribution during ILY is intended to promote the objectives of ILY and raise awareness of the critical literacy issues in Australia among government agencies and community groups. It can also be used as a training resource. To obtain a copy of this video please write to:

Roy Pugh, President
Australian Council for Adult
Literacy Inc.
c/o 452 Elizabeth Street
North Hobart 7000 Tasmania

Profile of Canada

(Continued from page 1)

Media

On-going Radio Program — Focus
Learner Written Materials
Tuesday mornings 11.30- 1200;
Station CIUT FM 89

National Umbrella Organizations

Movement for Canadian Literacy
168 First Avenue. Ottawa, Ont.
Tel: (613) 239 2395
Contact: Joyce White

Regroupement des Groupes Populaires
d'Alphabetisation
5040 BLvd, St.Laurent, Apt 1
Montreal, PQ H2T 1R7
Tel: (514) 277-9976
Contact: Louise Miller

Selected Literacy Events in Canada

International Learners Network
Conference
May 6-7
Venue: City of Toronto
Tel: 416 392-7015
Contact: Dana Peebles

National Training Event for Learners
May 17-21
Venue: Candle Lake, Saskatchewan
Tel: 416 392-7015
Contact: Dana Peebles

Summer Institute for Literacy
Practitioners
July 3-13, 16-27
Contact: Centre for the Study of Adult
Literacy, Dept. of Linguistics
Carleton University
Ottawa, Ont. K1S 5B6

STRENGTHENING STRUCTURES

P◆R◆O◆F◆I◆L◆E◆S

"Ride For Reading"

Since September 1989, brothers Seth and James Levy have been bicycling across the United States and meeting with junior high school students to encourage them to read and to gain an appreciation of their regional culture by combining literature, participatory theatre, storytelling and creative exercises. The brothers plan to ride 6,000 miles (approx. 9,600 km) with stops at about 30 high schools in 17 states before reaching the final destination of San Francisco, California in May 1990.

After graduating from Georgetown University, Washington D.C. in 1986, Seth Levy began working closely with literacy and reading issues. An avid bicyclist and traveller, he conceived the idea of riding his bicycle across the country to promote the literacy cause. His brother James joined him in Washington in 1988 to help develop the project.

With experience in theatre and American culture, James introduced the idea of using storytelling to bring audiences closer [illegible] American literature. In June 1989 the [illegible]vy brothers quit their part-time jobs to work exclusively on the project, conduct research and perfect their storytelling style.

The Levys are also experienced writers and have contributed materials for publication. The two brothers use a catchy name for the affliction they aim to cure. They call it "aliteracy", a rampant disinterest in reading anything.

In the spring of 1989, the Levy brothers organized a circle of interested volunteers to help them oversee their national project. This "Ride to Learn" project is sponsored by **Streetside Stories,** a non-profit, volunteer-staff organization that encourages the use of storytelling and innovative teaching methods to interest young adults in reading and American culture.

"I can relate to students who don't like to read. I can relate to the idea that it's tedious and that there are other things that seem more fun," James said.

The **Streetside Stories** programme and touring brothers hope that the youth of America will be encouraged to read if they are shown that reading can be adventurous, books are composed by real people who draw upon their experiences and that local cultures are worthy of exploration and celebration.

For more information contact:
Nathan D. Ainspan, Director of Public Relations
Streetside Stories
P.O. Box 4813
Washington, D.C. 20008 USA
Tel: (202) 463-2400
Fax: (202) 828-5393

'Each One Teach One'

Look for the Word and **I am a Winner** are the titles of just two of the many books which have been written by Canadian Virginia Coles.

Virginia, who now works full-time for the Niagara Regional Literacy Council in St. Catharines, Ontario, began her writing career about three years ago after she had discovered that all the reading materials which were being disseminated to literacy tutors around southern Ontario were geared towards children. She realized that it was up to her to find resource materials for their small reference library and reading materials for the many adult literacy students, which they would enjoy and which the practitioner would find useful. "We needed high interest, low level reading books' in order to attract the adults and keep their attention."

Virigina took a writing course through Laubach Literacy Canada and began producing books which combined simple language with adult words. Virginia's technique is to write the story first and then go back and put it into plain language. She also does all her own illustrations.

Virigina is supported in her office by two dynamic quasi full-time volunteers, Margaret Smith and Freda Simpson who also function as her proofreaders.

The Niagara Regional Literacy Council is hosting a conference in St. Catharines on June 07-09, 1990. Some of the seminar themes include, Legalities of Volunteerism, Cataloguing a Small Library, Using Newspaper as a Teaching Tool and Learning Strategies for Adults.

For more information on the conference and to obtain copies of Virginia's books please write to:
Virginia Coles
Niagara Regional Literacy Council
St. Joseph School
57 Facer Street
St. Catharines, Ont.
L2M 5H9 Canada
Tel: (416) 646-4434

Popular Literacy by Radio

A three day International Symposium of Popular Literacy by Radio, sponsored by the Latin American Council for Adult Education, Radio Santa Maria and Radio ECCA, will take place in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic from July 01-03, 1990. Some of the aims and objectives of the symposium are:

- **to collaborate in the plan proposed by Unesco for ILY;**
- **to work in mini groups and afterwards to have a general meeting on the diverse experiences of literacy, post literacy and basic education by radio;**
- **to make possible the comparison of results from among the diverse technologies of Radiophonic Education.**

The official languages of the Symposium will be Spanish and English and simultaneous translation will be available during the general sessions.

To obtain more information and a registration form please contact:
Secretaria Simposio Internacional
Alfabetizacion Popular por Radio
Federico Henriquez y Carvajal,
2-Gascue
Apartado Postal 780 - 2
Santo Domingo, D.N.
Republica Dominicana
Tel: (819) 686-4178
Fax: (819) 686-4178

Peace and Literacy Workshop

The Asian-South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education (ASPBAE) is planning to conduct a workshop in Yogiakarta, Indonesia, July 22-29, 1990. The theme will be "Literacy and Peace: Concentrating on Peace Education Content and Materials for Post-Literacy Programmes. For more information contact:
Jong-Gon Hwang
Chairman, ASPBAE S-R 3
Graduate School of Adult Education
Myong Ji University
Seodaemun-Ku, Seoul
South Korea 120-728
Tel: 82-2-308-3621
Fax: 82-2-307-6196

GREAT DEBATE

Learner vs Student

The following letter was received by and published in *Literacy on the Move*, the Newsletter of the Ontario Literacy Coalition, Toronto, Canada.

This letter is to protest the use of "learner" for the reason that we, the students, haven't just started to learn because we have started a literacy programme. We have been learning all our lives. Literacy programmes are for furthering our education. All other adults in continuing education of any form other than literacy are classified as students. There is no reason to label literacy students "learners". It's demeaning.

Furthermore, we feel that the term "learner" has been an insult to students throughout our school lives for the way it has been used in the school system, as "slow learner", being a person who is shoved to the back of the class so as not to be noticed by anybody else. We also feel that the use of "learner" in literacy networks implies that we are still considered by the government and others as second-class citizens. We should be classified as STUDENTS, as we are studying.

Please have the courtesy to allow us the same rights and privileges as other mature students in funded programmes. Don't use a demeaning word and put literacy students down further.

Gregorio Ingoglia, Student
Representative and Board Member
Laubach Literacy Canada

Are the feelings expressed by Gregorio Ingoglia about the term "learner" shared in other parts of the English speaking world? What term is used in other languages and does it provoke these negative feelings? In an attempt to help people to become literate, have they been thoughtlessly labelled with a debilitating, and offensive term? We would like to receive feedback concerning this issue from literacy students, groups and practitioners from around the world.

In honour of ILY, the Director-General of Unesco, Dr. Federico Mayor was invited to the annual Jackson Lecture at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, April 4, 1990, Toronto, Canada. The Lecture is held in memeory of the Institute's original Director. In the above photograph, Professor Alan Thomas presents Dr. Mayor with a copy of the "NGO Call to Action." A panel discussion with key people working in the literacy field was held after Dr. Mayor's speech and the presentation.

BOOK VOYAGE UPDATE

The Book Voyage is the major global project for ILY. The official launching of the Book Voyage took place in Bangkok, Thailand on January 12, 1990 at the Fourth World Assembly of the ICAE. This ceremony provided visibility to learners who participated as well as a motivating factor in encouraging regional representatives to have their own official launches. The interest in the project has been mounting everyday! The following is an update from several regions/countries.

Africa

AALAE has appointed Mr Joshua Ole Kirishwa as the new coordinator for the Book Voyage Project. The eleven countries involved are Lesotho, Botswana, Rwanda, Madagascar, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Zaire, Kenya, Senegal, Zambia and Uganda. Selection was done on the basis of interest they had shown in the project.

In March special hard cover books were bound in Nairobi, with the names of the participating countries inscribed on the covers. and were then sent to the countries in early April. When the voyage is completed in each country, the books will be returned to AALAE Secretariat in Nairobi by the end of August.

The Caribbean

The coordinator is Mariam Moulton-Campbell of CARCAE. The six Caribbean countries involved in the project are: Jamaica, Dominica, St Vincent, Barbados, St Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago. National organizers were selected by CARCAE and will be responsible for the organizing and production of the national books. Information on the individual countries will be given in future editions.

North America

The Movement for Canadian Literacy inaugurated the Canadian Book Voyage on January 25, 1990 in Ottawa, while in Quebec, the Regroupement des Groupes Popularies en Alphabetisation du Quebec launched its own Book Voyage on September 8, 1989.

All ten provinces as well as the two North West Territories are participating in the project and some are circulating more than one book since the number of books being circulated depends on the number of associations or groups that are working specifically.

Latin America

The Latin American project is coordinated by Cesar Picon through the CEEAL office in Chile. The project is divided into six phases: 1) Launching; 2) Preparation work; 3) Workshop on Popular Literacy National Books production; 4) Draft of national books; 5) Review of draft national books and final production; and 6) Production of the Latin American Book.

In January 1989 a workshop on the process of the production of popular literacy books was held. The regional book was launched in December 1989. A meeting and training event for the national coordinators to set criteria for the preparation of the book will take place in Chile 7-11 May, 1990.

Asia and the South Pacific

There are eleven countries in the South Pacific involved in the Book Voyage project. They are the Cook Islands, Fiji Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Western Samoa. These are the member countries of the regional University of the South Pacific.

The regional book will be launched on 10th May 1990 and representatives from member countries will be present to sign it. The Book will travel to each country to obtain the "messages of new literates". The book should be ready for presentation to the University Council in October and [illegible]lected pages will be sent to Toronto.

The Korean Society for Literacy and

Continued on next page

RESEARCH

Book Voyage Cont'd.

Adult Basic Education launched the Book Voyage Project at its National Seminar and Conference, February 22-23, 1990. The programme began with the candle lighting ceremony. The book will travel around the country until September.

Production of the International Book

The 'special pages' from all the participating regions are scheduled to arrive in the coordinating office by September 1990 in order to facilitate the production of the final book.

Final Event

The final official ceremony of the opening of the decade will be the presentation of the book to the Secretary-General of the United Nations on Human Rights Day, December 10, 1990. Daniel Wegener is the coordinator of the Event Planning Committee which was formed in New York in April. They will plan events such as a news conference, reception and a public meeting which will include children and adult literacy students.

If you wish to see your Book Voyage update included in the next issue please d information to the Editor at the onto address.

Questionnaire Results

We sent out 5,200 questionnaires and the response was tremendous. From all that we received we have deduced the following:

Results:

- 79% read the *Cover Story* regularly.
- 66% wants to see *in-depth article from a country* added to the Newsletter
- 71% think the *size* of the newsletter is *just right*
- 36% think the *layout is good*
- 64% find the *quality of writing good*
- 76% says the *frequency is just right*
- 65% find the *news items relevant*
- 69% think the *length of new items is just right*
- 67.5% says the use of *photographs is just right*
- 84% wants to see the newsletter published anyway even if it has to be quarterly instead of bi-monthly.
- 69% pass along their copy of the Newsletter to *colleagues.*
- 46% of responses are from non-governmental organizations.

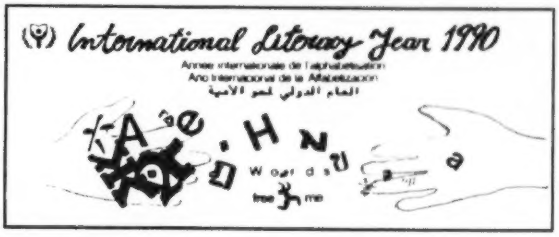
Face to Face Teaching

In Malta a national adult literacy programme was launched in early 1990 to commemorate International Literacy Year. The programme is being coordinated by the Adult Education Unit of Malta's Department of Education.

The programme involves over 1,500 participants and approximately 33 adult literacy centres have been set up throughout Malta and Gozo. Two preparatory courses for adult learning facilitators were organized by the Department prior to the commencement of the programme.

The ILY (Malta) Committee is also supplementing the "face to face" teaching, taking place at the centres, by literacy programmes which are being broadcast once a week on the Malta television channel. For more information contact:

Peter Mayo
Officer in Charge,
Adult Education Unit
Dipartiment ta'l-Edukazzjoni
Beltissebh, Malta


International Literacy Year 1990
Année internationale de l'alphabétisation
Año Internacional de la Alfabetización
العام الدولي لمحو الأمية
Words free me

A Decade for Literacy
ITFL

ITFL Posters and Pins: are available through the Toronto office. They are $5.00 US ach when ordered individually but the price is reduced for bulk orders and MUST BE RE-PAID (includes postage and handling). The pin is black and gold and the poster multicolored.

Literacy and World Change

As part of the general celebration of ILY, an international conference entitled "Literacy in a World of Change" will be organized in Stavanger, Norway, October 24-26, 1990, in coöperation with the Center for Reading Research, Stavanger College of Education and Unesco.

The aim of the conference is to narrow the gap between literacy researchers, policy makers and practitioners and to increase the public awareness of illiteracy as a major cultural problem and of the research results in the study of literacy.

Speakers will include scholars from Canada, Austria, USA, Germany, the Soviet Union and the Nordic countries.

For further details please contact:

Stavanger Forum
P.O. Box 410, 4001 Stavanger
Norway
Tel: 47 4 55 81 00
Fax: 47 4 55 10 15

LITERACY STUDENT'S CORNER

Student Profile

The following profile is from an interview with a literacy student who attended the Fourth World Assembly of Adult Education.

Maria Grzanka was born in Michigan, USA in 1951. She is a married mother of three and is presently a housewife. She was influenced to learn to read by the "Learn to Read" promotions aired on television and radio. She felt ashamed about not being able to read and at first was too embarrassed to tell her husband but after she started the programme she received a lot of encouragement from him. Her children had problems reading but she was unable to help them. She learnt to read in the last two years and now attends an advanced education class for enrichment and further reading.

This newsletter is partially funded by CIDA, SIDA and NORAD

ITFL ACTIVITIES

The International Task Force on Literacy (ITFL) is a coalition of regional and world-wide international non-governmental organizations to mobilize and stimulate activities of non-governmental organizations prior to, during and after the International Literacy Year 1990 (ILY).

Toronto Office

- A Report on the Special Meeting of the ITFL in Paris in February and an ITFL Update were prepared and sent to all member organizations.
- The *Declaration on Involving Learners* in International Literacy Year is now available in English, French and Spanish free of charge. The declaration was originally adopted at the 3rd meeting of the ITFL and was recently elaborated by international representatives of learners.
- A beautiful multi-coloured brochure on the ITFL has been produced and will be sent to member organizations.
- A luncheon will be held on Friday, May 11, for Father Fernando Cardenal, former Minister of Education and initiator of the National Literacy Campaign in Nicaragua, and five learners from six regions of the world who are in Canada to participate in an International Learners' Conference sponsored by the City of Toronto in collaboration with CUSO, ICAE and ITFL.
- A copy of the video "Happily Ever After" which was produced for the EFA Conference in Thailand will be sent to all ITFL members. The cost of a copy of this video is US $50.00 and must be pre-paid.

Toronto/ South Asia

The ITFL "roundtable" and the exhibit were held at the time of the World Conference on Education For All in Jomtien, Thailand in March 1990. The "roundtable" — NGO and Literacy — consisted of a partial video ("Happily Ever After") presentation and panel discussion on various aspects of the topic by four panellists.

The exhibit consisted of a wall map entitled "Literacy in Two Worlds", photos on sample literacy activities by NGOs, a display of the ITFL banner with a list of member organizations, and T-shirts with our logo "Words Free Me". Posters, brochures and other printed materials from our member organizations were placed for wide distribution.

South Asia/India Office

- An ITFL South Asia Office Advisory Board special meeting was held in early April. Among other things, discussions took place on the future direction of this office in order to better serve the region.
- The South Asia Office and Kerala University co-sponsored a two-day symposium on literacy and adult education at Trivandrum in February.
- Involved in organizing the International Women's Day Mela. Various activities such as debates, craft and painting competitions took place in Jafrabad Bustee, located on the outskirts of New Delhi. A number of literacy students from various centres participated.
- Plans for the following activities are underway:
    - Production of a newsletter designed to address literacy issues in the South Asian context.
    - Fund-raising events, such as concerts by Lata Mangeshkar and Amjad Ali Khan.
    - TV films and documentary on literacy

▼

International Task Force on Literacy
Coordinating Office
c/o ICAE
720 Bathurst Street, Ste. 500
Toronto, Ontario Canada M5S 2R4
Telephone: (416) 588-1211
Fax: (416) 588-5725
Telex: 06-986766 TOR

▼

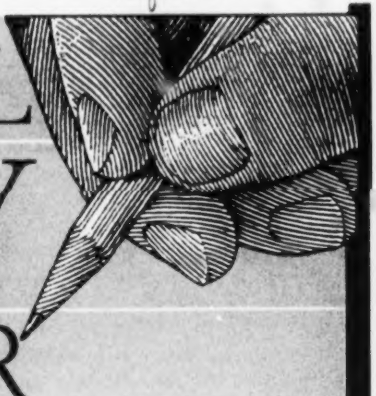
International Task Force on Literacy
South Asia/India Office
c/o Indian Adult Education Association
17-B Indraprastha Marg
New Delhi - 1100002 India
Tel: 331-9282
Cable: ADEO ASSO NEW DELHI
Fax: 35-33-18

Acquisitions

1990 INTERNATIONAL LITERACY YEAR

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL TASK FORCE ON LITERACY

Number 10, June 1990



The Caribbean Region

The population of the Caribbean Region is around 5,500,000. The geographic dimensions are defined by Michael Brown, a literacy expert from St. Vincent, as "The areas washed by the Caribbean Sea which have traditional and historical commonalities".

Definitive statistics on the extent of illiteracy in the Caribbean are difficult to find. Some recent studies have provided compelling evidence that illiteracy is a growing problem in the region and that there is an approximate 25-30% illiteracy rate. It has been easy for policy-makers in the English-speaking Caribbean to nurture the illusion that, with its supposedly solid legacy of British education, the region had a relatively high level of literacy. But current estimates show that the number of illiterates in this area stands well over a half-million people or 24% of the region's adult population. Unesco has acquired some statistical information on individual islands but an overall examination of the literacy problem in the Caribbean as a region has never been undertaken.

One of the major problems with tackling the literacy problem in this area is the language factor. Most of the islands that make up the Caribbean Region have English as their first official language but countries like Belize in Central America also have approximately six or eight separate dialects and languages which are spoken. French is the official language in Haiti, Martinique, and Guadeloupe. It has been reported that in some communities in Haiti, the poorest nation in the Caribbean, the illiteracy rate is as high as 100%. Dutch is still the official language of Curacao, Aruba, and Surinam. The Spanish-speaking countries such as Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic are linked to Latin America or the U.S.A. and not considered part of the Caribbean region. One fundamental fear of teaching people literacy skills in the official languages is the increased risk of losing their cultural identity and traditions. Despite these problems the Caribbean Region has a strong sense of unity and is linked by several regional organizations, both government and non-governmental.

One such example is the Caribbean Council for Adult Education (CARCAE) which was established in 1977. One of CARCAE's mandates is to support and collaborate with groups and organizations working towards the eradication of illiteracy in the region. CARCAE is a member of the International Task Force on Literacy.

The geographical scope of the Regional Literacy Programme represents the following territories: Antigua & Barbuda, Aruba and the Netherlands, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

CARCAE's major goal for International Literacy Year 1990 is to sensitize the Caribbean public to the urgency of becoming involved in the literacy programmes, to recognize and intensify the

Continued on page 6

PUBLIC AWARENESS

Editorial

We hope that you found the April issue of the Newsletter useful and informative. Very positive feedback has already begun to come in and we will continue to incorporate your ideas into future editions. As well as focusing on country profiles and success stories, each issue of the Newsletter will now carry at least one article or indepth profile on Women and Literacy. Please continue to send us your suggestions and recommendations.

We are planning a special issue for the August edition of the Newsletter. A small part will focus on world activities being organized for September 8, International Literacy Day. Please send us information on the events you have planned to celebrate this very important day.

The second focus will be on Literacy Students. The ITFL believes that "Learners' participation changes everything" and that "the process of their participation is integral to the process of learning." With these objectives in mind, the Newsletter will feature thoughts, visions, aspirations, hopes, and dreams of literacy students from around the world. We would like to invite students to submit articles, poems, letters, short stories, drawings and any other materials they would like to see published. Over the past year it has also come to our attention that many people employed in high positions who are not literate have had to become extremely creative in situations where they were forced to write or read something during a meeting or in front of an audience. We would very much like to publish and share with the world, some of those personal experiences. The submission deadline is August 12th.

We want to make the August issue a very special one but we will need your participation and involvement to achieve that goal.

Darlene E. Owens
Editor

Woman Chosen as Barbados Governor-General

Dame Nita Barrow, the Barbadian (Bajan) Permanent Representative to the United Nations, was sworn in on June 6, 1990 as the fourth native Governor-General. She is the first woman ever to hold this position.

> ***"More women should enter Caribbean politics because they might help to clean up dirty campaigns."***

Dame Nita was born into a family of civic activists. In a public career that spans more than 40 years, Dame Nita has worked or resided in almost every territory of the Caribbean. In her early years she chose nursing as a profession from among the limited number of careers then available to women and since then has held several senior positions in the Caribbean including Nursing Adviser for the Caribbean with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). In 1975 she became Director of the Christian Medical Commission of the World Council of Churches. She is also a Health Consultant for the World Health Organization (WHO). Dame Nita was the only woman on the Commonwealth Imminent Persons Group to visit South Africa in 1986. She has received several awards. Among them are three Honorary Doctorates: one from MacMaster University, Canada, one from the University of the West Indies, and the more recent from York University. Dame Nita is also an Honorary Fellow for the Royal College of Nursing in Great Britain.

Dame Nita also served as the President of the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) from 1981 to 1990. The ICAE has established an award in honour of her outstanding service to the international adult education movement. This award will be given each year to the ICAE member organization which has contributed most to the promotion of women in adult education.

Please send donations and nominations to:

Dame Nita Barrow Award
International Council for Adult Education
720 Bathurst St., Suite 500
Toronto, Ont., Canada, M5S 2R4

News from Newcastle upon Tyne

Many of you have already sent in your stories to the "Right to Read" exhibition which was mentioned in an earlier Newsletter. It will be held during October and November in Newcastle and later will be shown in other parts of England.

Students in Newcastle are reading and enjoying the pictures, photos and moving stories that have been posted by groups in many countries. Please send yours before **September 30.**

Your package should include the personal story of at least one student, information about where/why you study and either hand-drawn sketches or photos. An exhibition needs pictures and images as well as words! Please send to:

"The Right to Read"
International Literacy Year
Heaton Education Centre,
Trewhitt Road
Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 5DY U.K.

Illiteracy and Seniors

Delegates to a recent conference on illiteracy among older adults got some stark figures and dire warnings. The proportion of illiterate seniors in Canada, some 40% is much higher than the average of 24% — and it's growing. Furthermore, several conference presenters claimed that those seniors are at risk in the community.

The conference which was sponsored by *One Voice*, the Canadian Seniors Network, a national umbrella group for seniors, was held in Ottawa in April and brought together literacy workers and educators, professionals working with older people, and representatives of the major seniors groups in the country. Several international guests lent their perspectives on the problems and solutions on the table.

As we age, *One Voice* President Jean Woodsworth pointed out, our support systems may weaken as children grow up and move away, or when a spouse dies. "If we have depended on those people to do our reading for us, where do we turn?"

Since many older people have the time and skills to help meet the literacy needs

Continued on page 6

STRENGTHENING STRUCTURES

Churches Bring the Gift of Literacy

A workshop organized by several churches was held in March, 1990, bringing together 25 persons responsible for literacy in their churches. The aim of the workshop was to explain NRPs (New Reader Portion) and how they can be used in conjunction with literacy primers. These are booklets with special text, illustrations and format for new and marginal literates. The Malagasy Bible Society is attempting to bring the churches together in order to carry out a special programme for 1990. Some of the activities will include:

- Bible-content primers being reprinted in the Malagasy language;
- literacy volunteers being trained through the churches;
- a special award being offered to each person who teaches up to 25 people to read through the programme;
- a free New Reader booklet in the Malagasy language being given to each adult who learns to read through this programme;
- a free New Reader leaflet being given to every pupil in the primary schools throughout Madagascar.

For further information please contact:

Dr. Mae Alice Reggy
UBS Africa Regional Centre
Longonot Place, Kijabe Street
P.O. Box 42726
Nairobi, Kenya

New Publications

The teachers of the Family Literacy Project in Boston Massachusetts have written up their experiences in developing participatory curricula in a new book called "Talking Shop: A curriculum sourcebook for participatory adult ESL." The book includes teacher accounts, teaching materials and a bibliography of non-traditional sources. As well, project coordinator Elsa Auerbach has written a comprehensive curriculum guide to participatory adult/family literacy. The guide both outlines a process for developing context-specific curricula and documents how UMass Family Literacy Projects put that model into practice.

To obtain copies of either of these two books please write to:

Bilingual/ESL Department
UMass Harbor Campus
Boston, MA 02125
U.S.A.

Thirty Literacy Centres Open in Malta

The International Literacy Year (Malta) Committee has launched an ongoing national adult literacy programme. The Adult Education Unit of the Department of Education in Beltissebh, Malta is responsible for the coordination of this programme which involves exactly 1,481 participants who attend the 30 adult literacy centres scattered throughout Malta and Gozo.

A total of 111 learning facilitators are employed by the Department. Two preparatory courses for them were held. The areas covered included "Sociological and Philosophical Foundations of Adult Education", "Adult Learning Handicaps", "Adult Literacy Teaching: General guidelines" and "Teaching of Maltese Among Adults".

For further information please write:

Peter Mayo, Officer in Charge
Adult Education Unit
Department of Education
Beltissebh, Malta

LITERACY STUDENT'S CORNER

Student Profiles

In May, 1990, Literacy Students from around the world were invited to Canada to take part in an International Learners' Conference. Some of these students visited the office of the ITFL and the following excerpts are what they had to say about literacy in an interview with the Editor.

> ***"I wanted to help other adults to see the light which I received from Learn and Teach."***
>
> Susan Mnisi

■ Susan Mnisi joined Learn and Teach, a literacy and adult education organization, in 1979. She is a mother of six and a domestic worker from Johannesburg, South Africa. She began this programme for two reasons. First she wanted "to be able to get a better job and make more money to support her family" and secondly "to help the others coming into the group to read and write in Zulu, their mother tongue and English". She has recently become a spokesperson for the learners of her country. During the International Learners' Conference Susan spoke to the participants about "how and why I became involved with Learn and Teach".

■ Marlon Browne is a 23-year-old mason and farmer from Lowmans, St. Vincent. He attended public school but did not learn to read well. "The teachers left me behind because I could not learn as quickly as my other classmates." Marlon decided to join a literacy group called Leap-Lowmans Adult Education Programme in 1988. "It was good to join this class because it helped me out a lot — in that programme I gained what I missed out on in High School."

GREAT DEBATE

It's Time We Learned

Thirty years ago a mother was advised not to send her disabled child to school. "She won't live to see her twelfth birthday," she was told. The mother ignored this advice and today her daughter heads a department in the government.

For this one wonderful success story there are hundreds more that don't yet have a happy ending. Many disabled people are written off at an early age and never learn to read or write. The more severe the individual's disability, the less education he or she is likely to have. Tracy Odell, who works in the Ontario Ministry of Education's Literacy Branch says:

"There are numerous reasons why people with disabilities have lower levels of education. Many of them didn't have much time for school. They were always out of class for special therapy. It's not easy to study when you're coping with pain and discomfort."

Poverty is also a major cause of literacy problems everywhere but disabled people from poorer families are doubly disadvantaged. Parents struggling to keep a roof over their heads are less likely to have the time and effort to seek out the best education services for their disabled child.

Another problem is that "Classes are too large and there's a lot of crowding in poorer areas." Disabled students are often the first among the ones who slip through the system. Some are given high grade level certificates and simply pushed through the system.

When disabled adults start to look for community literacy programmes, they frequently hit barriers. One of the biggest is finding an accessible programme. For instance, in rural areas most buildings are not wheelchair accessible and local transportation is difficult to arrange. Another barrier is attitudes. There is a reluctance on the part of some literacy tutors to teach disabled people. They are very nervous and "don't yet feel they have the skills to work with someone who is disabled." To help overcome this barrier the Literacy Branch is co-sponsoring a guidebook, with Designing Aids for Disabled Adults, on using computers to teach literacy skills to disabled learners.

Tracy and others concerned with literacy and disabled people believe it is only a question of time. They feel the barriers to literacy programmes, already starting to crumble, will eventually fall.

Adapted from March of Dimes,
Advocate, Special Issue on Literacy

Literacy Cuts in India

Almost quietly, the Union Education Ministry has floated a proposal to reduce the size of the National Literacy Mission (NLM), the main vehicle of spreading literacy under the New Education Policy which itself is now under a cloud.

A document circulated to the committee which is reviewing the education policy says that it is proposed to reduce the number of adult education centres from the targeted 300 to 100 to facilitate better supervision, monitoring and evaluation. Th proposal, no doubt, makes sense as the size of the NLM has always appeared a bit unwieldy. But what has struck observers is that it would be put forward during International Literacy Year when there is so much talk of achieving universal literacy, and a conference on literacy is scheduled in New Delhi in late June.

The Education Ministry has come out against the idea of centrally sponsored adult education programmes being handed over to the State Governments as suggested in some quarters. An official paper puts it rather clumsily saying: "There is a fear that in the event of centrally sponsored schemes being transferred to the State Governments, the allocation for the programme may be less than at present."

The Hindu-Vizag
June 12, 1990

Photo Credit

The photograph of Federico Mayor, Director-General of Unesco in the April issue was taken by Buzz Burza, a Canadian publisher/photographer. Buzz lives six months of the year in Canada and six months in India.

Why should a disabled woman who has to worry about getting attendant care, housing, accessible transportation, family support and a job, learn to read and write?

Tracy Odell
***Compass*, Vol. 2**

Literacy Publication from Mainland China

A new Publication entitled "Literacy in China: Contribution to the International Literacy Year" has been published by the Department of Adult Education, State Education Commission and the National Association for Adult Education. The book is printed in both English and Chinese. Beautiful photographs accompany topics such as women and literacy, literacy statistics in China and policy making.

To obtain a copy please write to:
Dong Minchuan
National Association for Adult
Education in China
37 Damucang, Xidan
Beijing, China 100816

Eradicating illiteracy
Is like assisting blind people to see
To their eyes is now accessible
Shelves of items at the markets
and malls,
Signs, posters, graffiti, danger
signals.
Preparing to education
By making a man literate
Is like clearing bush and weeds
To put in crops and fruit trees
To put in crops and fruit trees
Dr. Kay Polydore
Dominica

This newsletter is
partially funded by
CIDA, SIDA and NORAD

RESEARCH

More Than Words Can Say

The Canadian Organization for Development through Education (CODE) recently launched a book entitled **More Than Words Can Say — Personal Perspectives on Literacy**. The book is a selection of cartoons and essays that range from whimsical anecdotes to thought-provoking insights about the nature and importance of literacy.

To obtain a **free** copy please write to:
Citizenship Sector
National Literacy Secretariat
25 Eddy Street
Ottawa, Ont.
K1A 0M5

Literacy 2000

Plan to attend **Literacy 2000: The Next Ten Years** where innovative research, practice, and programme models — international and national — will be on the agenda. **Make the next ten years matter.** The conference will be held on October 18, 19, 20, 21 in New Westminster, British Columbia, Canada.

For more information please contact:
Douglas College
700 Royal Ave.
New Westminster, B.C. Canada
Tel: (604) 527-5479
Fax: (604) 527-5155

First Americas' Forum on Literacy

This forum will take place in Caxias do Sul, Brazil, from September 26-29, 1990. It plans to bring together researchers, educators and practitioners to discuss the sociological, historical, pedagogical and anthropological elements of illiteracy. They will also examine an Education Theory which will enable them to fight illiteracy and its consequences, as well as proposals to create experimental zones for literacy.

For more information please contact:
Secretaria Municipal de Educacao
e Cultura
Centro Administrativo Municipal
Rua Alfredo Chaves, s.n.
95020 - Caxias do Sul, RS
Brazil

Literacy — Equity, Justice and Peace

The United Nations Association of the United States of America will hold a one-day national conference entitled "Looking Toward the Year 2000: Literacy — An Equitable, Just and Peaceful World Community" at the United Nations in New York on December 3, 1990. The conference will mark the 45th anniversary of the United Nations and the conclusion of International Literacy Year and present the global challenges of our fight against illiteracy in the 1990s. Invited speakers include: UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar, New York Governor Mario Cuomo, and Mrs. Barbara Bush. Numerous exhibits will be displayed by organizations involved in the fight against illiteracy throughout the world. Other activities include action seminars which will focus on areas such as: The New Reader Movement, Family Literacy, Workplace Literacy, etc. The three main themes of the conference — Equity, Justice and Peace will be incorporated into each seminar presentation.

For more information please contact:
James P. Muldoon
United Nations Association of
the United States of America
485 Fifth Ave.
New York, N.Y. 10017-6104 U.S.A.

Connexions

PROFILE: ZAMBIA

Zambia is a former British Colony (1924-1964) located in Central Africa. It has a population of seven million, 73 languages grouped under six language zones. English is the official language for education and administration. The country is divided into the provinces of Lusaka, Central, Western, Southern, Eastern, Northern, North Western and Luapula.

In 1980 it was estimated that adult illiteracy stood at 41.2%. The total number of those considered illiterate was 1.6 million. Illiteracy is highest among women and ranges between 60% and 74% in rural areas.

The International Literacy Year National Coordinating Committee, embracing many NGOs, the Unesco Commission and government departments and supported by the Ministry of Labour and Culture, has and is coordinating many national activities for 1990. Some of these include:

- Launching of ILY - February 1990
- Radio and TV Discussions - March
- Report on Committee Activities to ITFL, Canada - March
- Book Voyage - giving books to providers - March
- Resource Mobilization - March to December
- Commissioning of Postage Stamp - March
- Publication of feature articles and daily papers - March to December
- Newsletter - March to December
- Production of Literacy Materials - February to May
- Training of Trainers - April to May
- Literacy for Development Workshop - May to June
- National Seminar on Literacy - August
- Celebration of International Literacy Day - August
- Evaluation of the Impact of the Year's Activities - December

For more information please contact:
A.M. Chitambo
Secretary, National Coordinating
Committee for ILY, Zambia
c/o Ministry of Labour, Social
Development and Culture
P.O. Box 32186
Lusaka, Zambia

ITFL ACTIVITIES

The International Task Force on Literacy (ITFL) is a coalition of regional and world-wide international non-governmental organizations to mobilize and stimulate activities of non-governmental organizations prior to, during and after the International Literacy Year 1990 (ILY).

Toronto Office

- Welcome to the new ITFL member: The International Federation of Settlements and Neighbourhood Centres, Headquarters: Birmingham, United Kingdom.

  Fundraising efforts around the Book Voyage and Newsletter are underway. If you can be of assistance please let us know.

- A short promotional video on the **Book Voyage** was produced for fundraising purposes and other related activities.

International Task Force on Literacy
Coordinating Office
c/o ICAE
720 Bathurst Street, Ste. 500
Toronto, Ontario Canada M5S 2R4
Telephone: (416) 588-1211
Fax: (416) 588-5725
Telex: 06-986766 TOR

South Asia/India Office

- The Book Voyage project in the South Asia region is well underway — see Book Voyage update this issue.
- Planning for fundraising concerts by Lata Mangeshkar and Amjad Ali Khan are underway.
- For more information on the report of the ITFL India meeting please contact:

International Task Force on Literacy
South Asia/India Office
c/o Indian Adult Education Association
17-B Indraprastha Marg
New Delhi - 1100002 India
Tel: 331-9282
Cable: ADEO ASSO NEW DELHI
Fax: 35-33-18

BOOK VOYAGE UPDATE

There are now 66 countries around the world participating in the International Book Voyage!

We have received word that 11 countries are now participating in the Book Voyage in the Arab Region. We will receive a list of these countries soon and will pass them along in the next update.

North America

As you know from our last update, Canada has been actively involved in the Book Voyage and has two books: one in French and one in English, the two official languages of the country.

We had imagined that several groups in the U.S. were also involved. We are now pleased to report that after trying for months to solicit a coordinator, Peter Waite, Executive Director of Laubach Literacy, has valiantly agreed to coordinate the project. Laubach's role is a monitoring one. The Coordinator will keep in touch with all the groups who are involved or would like to become involved in the project. Peter will also be responsible for sending updates on the progress of the project to the office in Toronto. If you are already involved or would like to be, please contact Peter Waite at:

Laubach Literacy International
1320 Jamesville Ave., Box 131
Syracuse, N.Y. 13210 U.S.A.
Tel: (315) 422-9121
Fax: (315) 422-6369

ILLITERACY AND SENIORS (cont'd.)

of its people, *One Voice* works with seniors and the literacy community to involve more of them as volunteers. *One Voice* is also proceeding to develop a National Literacy Strategy for Older Canadians, due in October.

For more information please contact:
Sylvie Deliencourt
901-350 Sparks Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1R 7S8 Canada
Tel: (613) 238-7624
Fax: (613) 235-4497

THE CARIBBEAN REGION (cont'd.)

work being done in the region and to join forces with the world in wiping out illiteracy by the year 2000. A number of activities and programmes are planned throughout the region during 1990.

For more information on literacy programmes in the Caribbean please contact:

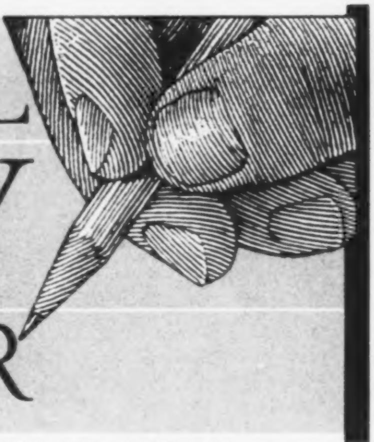
Miriam Moulton-Campbell
JAMAL
9 King St.
Kingston, Jamaica

or

Michael Brown
National Association for Mass Education
P.O. Box 304
St. Vincent, West Indies

1990 INTERNATIONAL LITERACY YEAR

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL TASK FORCE ON LITERACY



Number 11, August 1990
Special Issue With Contributions From New Learners

DECLARATION on Involving Learners

This Declaration came out of the third meeting of the ITFL held in Chantilly, France, December 1988

Why Involve Learners?

- Learners know their own problems and needs best.
- Learners are stigmatized and marginalized.
- The process of participation is integral to the process of learning.
- Learner-centred methodology must involve learners. Learner involvement changes the relationship between learner and instructor towards a relationship of co-learning.
- Learner involvement validates programs, increases efficiency and effectiveness.
- Learner involvement encourages self-reliance and self-determination, dignity and self-confidence.
- Learner involvement creates possibilities for self-help, advocacy and movement for social change.
- Learners' participation changes everything.

How to Get Learners Involved

- Create the conditions and the environment to ensure learner involvement.
- Change the definition of learner to emphasize process and not chronological position.
- Redefine the basic concepts and definitions
- Promote participation of learners in all results of ITFL deliberations (posters, documents, slogans,etc.)
- Involve learners in all aspects and activities for International Literacy Year.

Our Aims

- To build a movement of learners.
- To create a learner-centred planning process.

Practical Suggestions

International

- Involve learners in future ITFL meetings.
- Involve learners in delegations to Unesco.
- Organize special sessions for learners at world congresses.
- Unesco will involve learners in long-term policy discussions.

National

- Learners should be involved in National Committees for International Literacy Year.
- At least one conference for learners in 1990 should be organized to develop learners' own perspectives.
- Each NGO should organize a meeting/workshop to develop the collective voice of learners.

Local

- Any needs assessment must involve learners.
- Local programs must involve learners in planning.
- Learners' perspective must be a critical factor in evaluation.
- Learners have to become facilitators.

Further Points

- Resources must be available for learner participation.
- Involving learners is a co-responsibility and the ITFL should take a leadership role.
- We need to collect and disseminate learner involvement examples.

Permanent Concerns of the ITFL

- We need to try to reach the most vulnerable learners who are the most difficult to reach.
- We need to address the particular needs of disabled learners.
- If we are serious about developing a democratic movement, no meetings related to ILY activities should happen unless learners are fully involved.
- The ITFL does not have the right to say that we speak for learners unless learners are involved in the planning process.

Nights and Days of My Life

The world talks
The world laughs
It sings and dances
Gossips and rejoices
around me
but my arms can't reach
my ears can't hear
I talk and laugh
sing and dance
only in my dreams.

At night, my thoughts revolt
They question my freedom
for, they are latent
when my sweat is skilfully
moulded
into a speaker
for popularising the minority.

During the day
I am filled,with abilities
My qualities are purified every
hour
raising my natural position
But my reward is half a cup
yet still used to shield my
protests
But
One waiting day
my tongue shall be awake
my teeth shall bite
and my hand shall write
to seek my position
in the literate society.

Mutya Mooka
A poem read to the International
Literacy Year Seminar,
Lusaka, Zambia

What Literacy Means for Koreans in Japan

"If I can write, I want to write about my hardships I have had in my life."

"If I can read and write, I will be no longer afraid of going to a municipal office, I will be able to freely travel anywhere. I long wanted to do so before I die".

"Imagine how hard it was for me when I could not read what the letters my children brought home from school said...."

"It used to be easy to buy anything without knowing how to read, but nowadays everything including train tickets are sold by vending machines...."

These are the feelings of ordinary old Korean women of the first generation living in Japan.

The precise situation of Koreans in Japan is still unknown today. However, illiterates actually exist, and the literacy work for those illiterate Koreans have been organized by civil groups composed by both Koreans and Japanese. They are the literacy classes and mothers classes. Elderly women of the first generation also learn at night schools (some of them organized voluntarily) which provide the right to education for those who have been deprived of it.

Recently we see the increasing, although still slow at its pace, number of literacy classes organized at public institutions for social education.

Bae Jung Do
(National Council for Combatting Discrimination Against Ethnic Minorities, Japan)

The School Dropout Speaks Out

Let me tell you something
awkward about my life.
A school dropout's daily life
is hardly something to boast about.

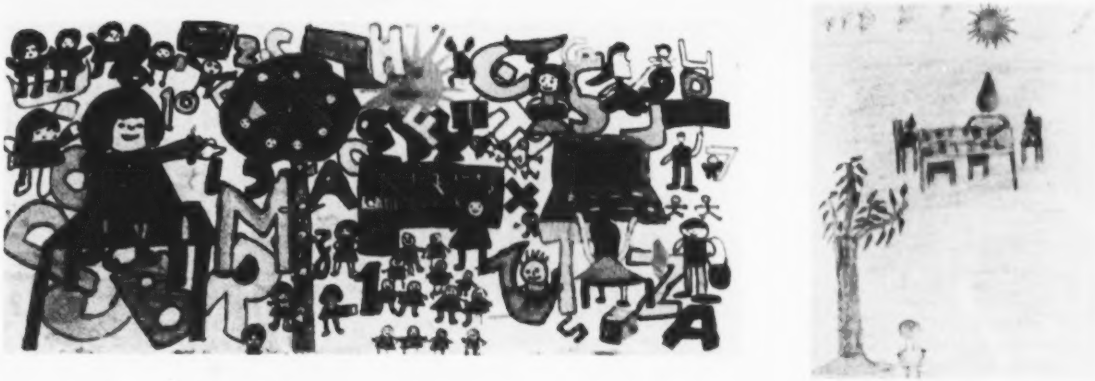
Reading and Writing I was opposed to
as a student in school.
Now in this Year of Literacy I'm
beginning to have second thoughts.

All around me I see good examples
of youths who have learnt to read and
write.

My illiteracy fever I'm trying to erase
through more adult education classes.

O Youths of Fiji;
My advise is pay more attention to
schoolwork.
Be literate so you can advance.
Learn from my mistakes if
you want a good life later.

This is a translation of Peni Karalo's poem originally written in the Fijian language. (Na Gone biu Vuli Dole)



Literacy drawings by students from the Alif Laila Book Bus Society, Lahore, Pakistan.

I Really Feel Part of the Programme Here

Toronto born Lloyd Pike, is an ambitious and highly accomplished new Learner who visited the ITFL office. Lloyd is a single father of a 3 year old boy and has been a student at Toronto's East End Literacy for the past six years. He is the inventor of an Identification Card for literacy students to enable them to ask for assistance in filling out forms and other documents in banks, stores and government offices, etc., without feeling embarrassment with their inability to read and write. On the front of the card there is a picture of the student and on the back the inscription:

This card belongs to a student who may require assistance with reading and filling out forms.

For many years Lloyd has worked hard on student involvement, and has been an active member of the newsletter committee. Now he is public speaking on his experiences in literacy and how the students at East End Literacy are doing, how they are helping others to get involved and how to start up student groups. He wrote this article for the Newsletter:

Lloyd Pike, East End Literacy

"I am involved with a lot of literacy activities. When I came back from my year off in October 1989 I got involved again with East End Literacy. I help out in the office with answering phones and take messages and photocopy.

I am also on an ILY committee, it is connected with MTML (Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy). I helped plan and run a workshop it was called "Student Involvement Workshop", it was an experience.

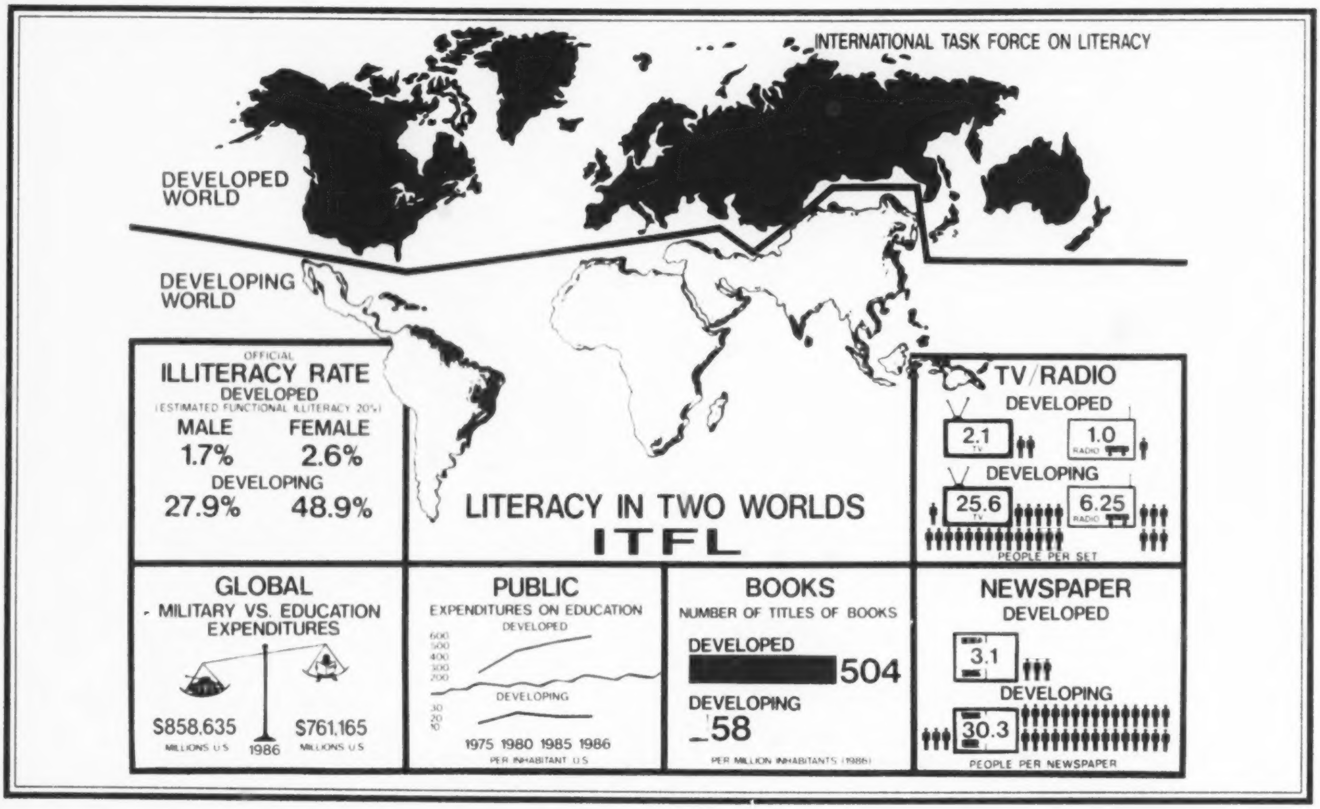
I attended two other workshops at Public Libraries, where I spoke about my first experience in using a Public Library.

I also help plan the Tutor Training Session, do Public Speaking and help out with the Drop-In on Thursday afternoon. I really feel a part of the programme here."

Life is Greater for Me

"I am so happy that I can now read and write and I am numerate. As a taxi driver I used to be embarrassed. It is different now. I am able to read road signs, maps and able to correspond with and explain many things to tourists who visit our beautiful island. Life is greater for me and my children. I will continue to learn. Thanks for literacy programmes.

Elsie Holder
The Caribbean



I Want to Live Another 10 Years

This letter was written by an elderly Japanese Buraku woman. She never went to school because of discrimination. At the age of 68 she began to participate in her community's literacy class. This was the first letter she wrote to her friend.

I didn't go to school because my family was poor. So I was completely illiterate.

I can write most *kana* (Japanese phonetic letters) now because I have studied in a literacy class. I used to ask someone to write my name for me at the receptionist desk when I went to see a doctor. But the other day I finally wrote down the name by myself. I was overjoyed when I heard a nurse calling my name "Ms. Kitadai."

In the past I wasn't really impressed by the sunset glory, but now that I know how to read and write I can really appreciate the beauty of the sunset glory.

As I walk in the town these days I feel very glad when I find letters that I know in street signs and advertisements. I enjoy going to a supermarket and a "Thursday market" as I can calculate now.

I no longer get ashamed for not being able to recognize the number of my room in an inn because I can read numbers now. I want to study more and more. I want to live another ten years!

Iro Kitadai
Japan

Literacy Campaign Anthem

Literacy for Education
Builds a solid foundation
Ladies, gentlemen and children
Let's stand up and all be there
The campaign for literacy
Let the whole world now declare
Let's join hands and be committee
To eradicate illiteracy

Africa, your drums now bring out
Let the tom-tom set our pace
Americas, Europe and Asia
And the southern Pacific
Let us all march on united
To destroy the enemy
Let's join hands and be committed
To eradicate illiteracy

Days are gone when all the nations
Were filled with illiteracy
Let all people now learn to read
yes, let all now read to learn
Join the struggle right to-day
For tomorrow is too late
Let's join hands and be committed
To eradicate illiteracy.

Composed by Majanja Zaali I.M. of Kampala, Uganda for International Literacy Year. The music was arranged by Fred Kisiriko Lukabwe.

For information on how to acquire a copy of the music please write:

Majanja-Zaali I.M.
Education Secretary
National Adult Education Association
P.O. Box 8174
Kampala, Uganda

Correction

In the June issue of the Newsletter it was incorrectly stated that a book entitled More Than Words Can Say — Personal Perspectives on Literacy was available through the National Literacy Secretariat. The correct address to write to obtain a copy of this book is:

Canadian Organization for Development Through Education
321 rue Chapel Street
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
K1N 7Z2

The Two of Us

The two of us,
as time goes by
we feel as if we can try
reading, writing, spelling too,
and we owe it all to you.

But it takes you and your tutor,
she helps you see things through.

And pretty soon you will see
How important it is to read.

Stacie Coleman,
United States of America

SEPTEMBER 8 CELEBRATION

In celebration of International Literacy Day, the International Council for Adult Education announces the Official Opening of its International Literacy Resource Centre. The opening will be held on Friday, September 7, 1990 from 4-7 p.m., 720 Bathurst St., 4th Floor, Toronto. The International Literacy Resource Centre aims to provide unique international literacy materials to the Canadian literacy community. In addition, the Resource Centre will be hosting occasional meetings for the local literacy community with visiting international practitioners. Anyone interested in literacy issues: practitioners, researchers, students, will find the Resource Centre's collection interesting and useful.

I Wanted to Go Somewhere on My Own

I basically joined the literacy centre because I wanted to be able to go somewhere on my own, without my husband. I found I couldn't move around because I couldn't read bus numbers or follow directions and people weren't helpful.

Besides this, when I visited my village, I could neither send nor receive any letters. Now I've learned enough to at least write to my husband, when I'm away. I also want my children to be literate and I can help them to be so when I am literate.

I have learned so much and I want to carry on learning.

Smt. Ramrati
New Delhi, India

It Was Hard to Understand for Me

We are a class of adult learners with physical disabilities. We meet in the mornings at St. Christopher House, a Community Centre in mid-town Toronto, Canada. Anne Preston and Karen Hadley are the facilitators. In May we attended a two-day Literacy Conference at the Toronto Convention Centre sponsored by The Toronto Board of Education and other groups involved with literacy. This is a report of our experiences.

We went to a conference called "Literacy as a Right" on May 6 and May 7. On Sunday we heard Stephen Lewis speak about International Literacy Year. Elaine, our volunteer, thought it was good to meet so many people who cared about literacy. It is hard to believe how many people can't read. Lois went to a workshop about how to get a job. "It was hard to understand for me. We talked about attitudes". Elaine went to a workshop called "Clear Language and Design". We worked on making forms and statements clear and simple. On Monday we heard a long panel discussion. We thought it was very boring. Chester went to the workshop about literacy and people who are physically challenged and he learned some things. Randi was happy to be in the workshop with his friends from St. Christopher House. Ann and Karen, who teach at St. Christopher, facilitated the work-

(Continued on page 6)

I Know More to Manage by Myself

My name is Diego Torres, I am 58. Before I couldn't read and now I know a bit more to manage myself.

As I didn't know how to read everybody told me things that's why it's interesting to know how to read so people don't say anything about.

Without knowing how to read I worked as a head of a time in Renfe (Spanish railway) and someone else had to read things for me. Now that I am a pensioner now I am learning a bit to read and when I know how to read better nobody will say anything because I'll be the same as they are. If they know how to read I do too, that's why I am coming to school.

Diego Torres
Barcelona, Spain

A literacy class for both adults and children in the Ambato region of Ecuador.

Testimonies of Indigenous Women of Ecuador

"...When many people go from the fields to the city, it is the women who stay home and look after things. The men are the ones who always go out and off to work. This is one of the serious problems, the women must stay at home, looking after the children, her land...."

"...The man goes to the city looking for work and a way of making money for the family. The woman stays at home and therefore does not have the opportunity to participate in a literacy programme or any other work outside of the home. For this reason women have been unable to participate in literacy...."

"...For indigenous women the problem is worse yet, she has nowhere to leave her children. For indigenous women it is not only the problem of where to leave the children but the animals as well...."

"...It also makes us realize that all of us are dominated and discriminated against, as in the example of domestic work which is very badly paid. Most of the women who work in the fields have no salary, no proper work...."

"...In this case the woman sees that she does more work than the man. Already there are women who, outside of all the work they do in their homes and fields, must give up their work with literacy organizations. Men go to the literacy organizations and their agricultural work, generally they never look after the house or children. I believe that the indigenous woman does double work...."

"...Women have many, many obligations at home. At home she must look after the children, live far away from everything with no chance of moving anywhere. In the evenings the women are not free to even go for a walk...."

"...Women have not participated in literacy because of the many domestic chores she has, looking after the animals, the children and working in the fields at the same time...."

This newsletter
is partially funded by
CIDA, SIDA and NORAD.

Note of Thanks

The staff of the ITFL would like to convey their sincerest thanks to Ms. Kathy Bentley and the Calgary Further Education Council for their very generous donation of $600 which will go towards the continued production of the ILY Newsletter.

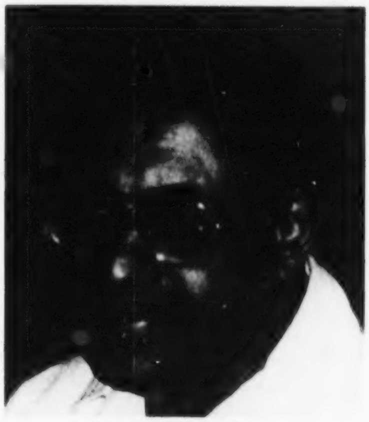
ITFL ACTIVITIES

The International Task Force on Literacy (ITFL) is a coalition of regional and world-wide international non-governmental organizations to mobilize and stimulate activities of non-governmental organizations prior to, during and after the International Literacy Year 1990 (ILY).

Toronto Office South Asia/India Office

ITFL Evaluation Preparations are Underway

Dr. Ravindra Dave visited the Toronto office of the ITFL in August and began preparations for the ITFL evaluation. At the last ITFL meeting which was held in October 1989 in India it was agreed by the members of the ITFL that an evaluation of their overall work be carried out. Dr. Ravindra Dave was unanimously nominated to conduct this evaluation. A special meeting of the ITFL was later called in Paris and members for the Evaluation Committee were selected. These include: Joyce White, Canada; Josef Muller, Germany; Jeanne Fontaine, France; Louise Miller, Quebec, Canada; Cesar Picon, El Salvador; and Seydou Sall, Kenya. The Evaluation Committee will meet at the final ITFL in Berlin, Germany, February 1991.



Dr. Ravindra Dave

Dr. Dave gained an extensive evaluation background through his Doctoral work at the University of Chicago. His many years of work have been in research, evaluation and life-long learning. Dr. Dave was the Dean as well as a Professor at the National Council for Education, Research and Training where he was in charge of the Department of Literacy and Basic Education, Development and Evaluation. He also spent three years as the Director of the Asian Education Research Project in Japan. Dr. Dave was the Director of the Unesco Institute in Hamburg for more than a decade. He has been the author and co-author of many books pertaining to the concept of life long learning.

In an interview with the ILY Newsletter Editor, Dr. Dave shared his thoughts about the evaluation:

"The ITFL is a special type of coalition created for a specific task connected to ILY. The preparation of the evaluation is to analyze the action taken, experiences gained and impact generated by the ITFL during the periods 1987 through December 1990. The method that will be followed will be more illuminative and future oriented and therefore the evaluation will be both qualitative and quantative."

The ITFL staff in Toronto thoroughly enjoyed working with Ravindra Dave. His kindness, patience, wonderful sense of humour and gentle manner made him a great pleasure to have around!

Has Education No End?

"When I grew up I did not get an opportunity to go to school and to become literate. I got married and I was still illiterate and I found that people had jobs, I didn't have a job. When these programmes were offered to us I was only too happy to join them and some of us dropped out of the classes, others continued for year in and year out. Some of our colleagues ask us, "Has education no end?" I don't know, but I will continue to learn until I found if education has an end."

Sitta Barkari
Kenya

They Humiliate Those Who Can't Read and Write

"They humiliate someone who doesn't know how to read and write. When I went to register my newborn daughter, we had to write our names and I didn't know how. So I asked the person there to do it for me, but she refused and I had to insist on telling her I didn't know how to read and write."

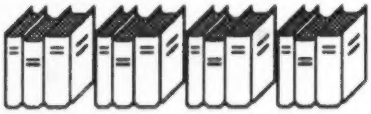
From testimonies of "Pobladores"
(marginalized dwellers)
Santiago, Chile

It Was Hard To Understand For Me

(cont'd.)

shop and felt it went well. Lois went to another workshop and spoke up on disabled rights because they had forgotten about it. Good for Lois. We did enjoy most of the Conference.

The Morning Group, Canada

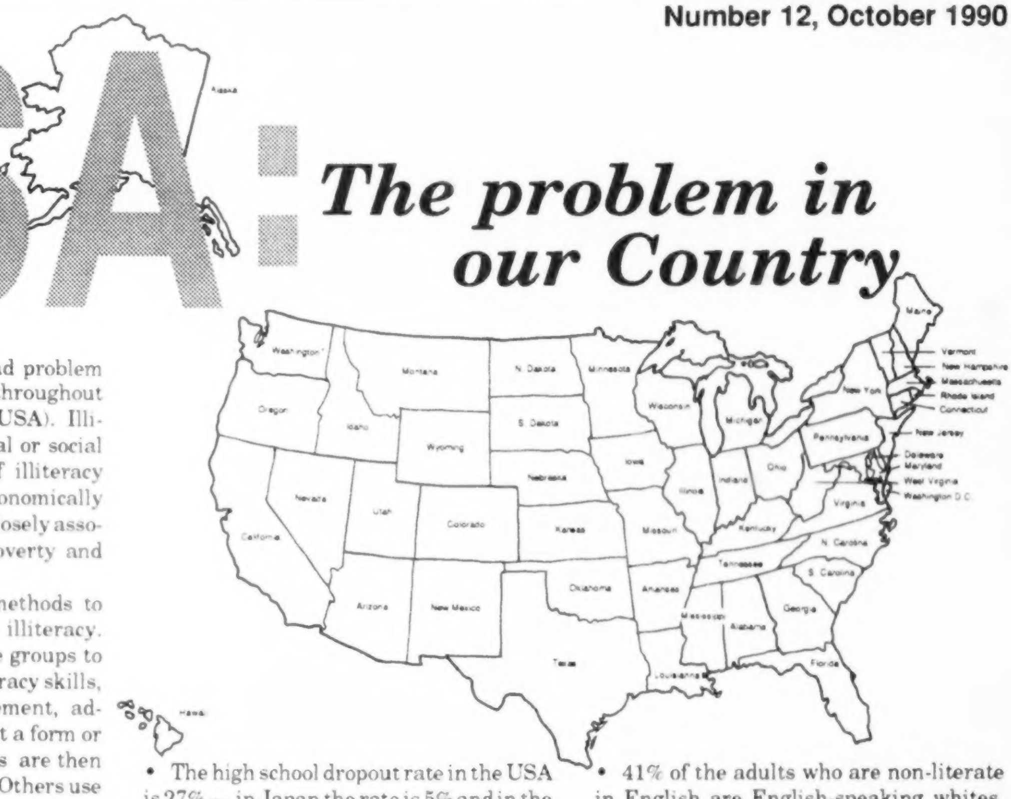


1990 INTERNATIONAL LITERACY YEAR

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL TASK FORCE ON LITERACY

Number 12, October 1990

USA: The problem in our Country


Alaska
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Utah
Colorado
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Missouri
Kentucky
Virginia
N. Carolina
Tennessee
S. Carolina
Oklahoma
Arkansas
Arizona
New Mexico
Mississippi
Alabama
Georgia
Texas
Louisiana
Florida
Hawaii

ILLITERACY is a widespread problem among adults and older youths throughout the United States of America (USA). Illiteracy knows no racial, cultural or social boundaries, although rates of illiteracy seem to be highest among economically disadvantaged people and are closely associated with unemployment, poverty and poor health.

Literacy experts use two methods to measure the extent of adult illiteracy. Some test the ability of sample groups to complete tasks that require literacy skills, such as reading an advertisement, addressing an envelope, filling out a form or using a street map. The results are then applied to the total population. Others use the completion of the 5th, 8th or 12th grades as benchmarks of literacy.

Some facts about illiteracy in the USA:

- One in five (20%) American adults is functionally illiterate (functional illiteracy is defined as people who have reading skills below the eighth grade level, and are unable to read to their children, understand street signs, job application forms or the instructions on a medicine bottle).
- In addition to the 20% functional illiteracy rate, another 34% of American adults are only marginally literate.
- The high school dropout rate in the USA is 27% — in Japan the rate is 5% and in the Soviet Union the rate is 2%.
- The USA ranks 49th among 156 United Nation member countries in its rate of literacy.
- 60% of America's prison inmates are non-literate and 85% of all juvenile offenders have problems reading.
- 50% of American adults are unable to read an 8th grade level book.
- 25.6% of all females age 25 and older do not have a high school diploma compared to 24.9% for males.
- 51% of illiterate adults live in small towns and suburbs, 41% live in urban areas, and 8% live in rural areas.
- 41% of the adults who are non-literate in English are English-speaking whites, 22% are English-speaking African Americans, 22% speak Spanish and 15% are other non-English-speaking people.
- Up to 86% of non-English-speaking people who are illiterate in English are illiterate in their native language.

■

Since there is a vast number of groups, organizations, programmes, etc. working in literacy in the U.S., the Contact Centre has set up an over-the-telephone referral service called the Literacy Hotline. This service provides the caller with telephone numbers to state and/or local hotline

Continued on page 6

PUBLIC AWARENESS

From the Editor

We would like to thank all the literacy groups, practitioners and especially the literacy students for all their support with the August edition.

Thanks to four very brilliant and articulate educators, especially Dr. Herbert Kohl who began the debate with his feisty article, we have created in this edition an "international dialogue" around the question of "Literacy as Liberation". We would be delighted to receive any criticisms, suggestions and/or conflicting points of view you would like to share.

In the December issue we will highlight the ceremonies of the final stage of the Book Voyage. Please send your books to your coordinators as soon as possible if you have not already done so.

We also wish to thank the Silverton Women's Institute of Ontario for their donation and kind support for the continuance of the Newsletter.

Darlene E. Owens

ILY Activities in Norway

Many major activities are taking place in Norway for International Literacy Year. Some of these include:

- 50,000 ILY posters, 30,000 information brochures and 300,000 buttons with the ILY symbol were distributed to schools, libraries and organizations;
- Newsletters and a special ILY issue of information magazines issued by the United Nations Association in Norway distributed;
- "Read 90" — literature/reading campaign in elementary grades;
- School class competition that is made suitable also for weak readers;
- School campaign to support selected literacy projects in developing countries;
- Special publicity around the American feature film "Stanley and Iris" (Robert De Niro portrays an adult who does not read and write);
- Children's Book Week;
- Many conferences on issues such as: illiteracy among indigenous Sami population; illiteracy among immigrants and refugees; functional illiteracy; basic education; literacy and development aid; literacy in a world of change, etc.;
- Travel scholarships for journalists interested in literacy problems;
- National television, press releases and radio coverage as well as revised versions of education TV series on reading and writing for adults.

For more information please contact:

Samnemnda for Studiearbeid
0105 Oslo 1 Norway

Libraries are Knowledge, Knowledge Means Development

As a contribution to the International Literacy Year, the Zambia Library Association has embarked on a programme of action whose emphasis is on promotion of literacy and inculnation of the reading habit in the country, especially amongst the youth.

In May, the Association hosted an Open Day to educate the public on the contribution being made by libraries and other information handling agencies to development, and also to raise money for a reading contest to be held later in the year. Other activities planned specifically as a direct contribution to the challenge before the ILY are as follows:

- Promotion of reading: stressing the advantage of learning to read and use the library;
- Lectures: a series on the role that libraries play in the promotion of literacy;
- Reading Contests: to encourage people to learn to read and write in order to become responsible citizens;
- Visiting: primary and secondary schools, to encourage and revive Literacy Clubs;
- Filmshows and Poster Exhibition: will be organized and mounted in all parts of the country;
- Outreach Activities: donation of reading materials to needy communities.

The Zambia Library Association sees 1990 as an opportunity to claim its rightful place and role in the promotion of literacy and that literacy should be stressed and publicized at the national level.

Literacy Students' Corner

My Story

"I am one person who has been helped by reading very much and I know it can be good for anybody. I can read the Bible in Maasai and Swahili. I now feel a lot of confidence because I can walk in front and read the Bible in the church. Now I am a leader of the church and one of the people who sign the bank account of the church. When I go to the English-speaking church in Nairobi, I cannot always follow, but I go back home and read the passage to be sure that what the pastor is saying is true.

There's a proverb in the Maasai language which says, "Wisdom does not lose its teeth". So the ability to read and write is very important to everyone because of the way it is helping me now. When I compare myself now to others who cannot read and write, I want all of them to learn to read and write soon.

Timothy Roika ole Kirisuah, Kenya

* * * * *

Literacy is about reading and writing. It is talking about our lives and our problems. It is challenging the problems that we have. It is understanding the changes that happen around us. We want to know and understand these themes: payslips, banking, forms, the government, sanctions, apartheid, capitalism, unemployment, the state of emergency and many other things."

Quote from a literacy student, Johannesburg, South Africa

STRENGTHENING STRUCTURES

First Forum on Literacy in Puerto Rico

On July 4, 1990, San Juan, Puerto Rico celebrated the first Forum on Literacy which was co-sponsored by the Puerto Rican Commission for Action on Literacy and the Council for Advanced Education of Puerto Rico. This forum highlighted the sharing of experiences, presentation suggestions and strategic plans which could bring about the eradication of illiteracy in Puerto Rico by the year 2000.

The Forum was attended by many distinguished educators and intellectuals from the Caribbean island. Some of those who attended were: Dr. Ismael Ramirez Soto, Executive Director of the Council for Superior Education; Professor Ana Victoria de Leon, Director of the Literacy Component of Extension Services of the Public Education Department of Puerto Rico; Dr. Eduardo Apote from the University of Puerto Rico; Dr. Ismael Rodriguez Bou, a retired educator; Mr. Gilberto Morales-Napoleoni, Director of the Library at the Inter-American University in Guayama and President of the Puerto Rican Commission for Action on Literacy. The Moderator of the event was Antonio Molina, Acting President for the Puerto Rican Association for Unesco.

The problem of Puerto Rican illiteracy, unknown at the international level, is quite dramatic. It has been discovered that some 227,886 people on the island are illiterate. Ana Victoria de Leon explained that the Department of Public Education in Puerto Rico, through the Programme of Extensive Education, has been able to offer classes to non-literates of 16 years of age and older in the skills of reading, writing and mathematics. She also mentioned that the rapid depletion of funds was affecting the programmes.

Erma Stultz

Dr. Ismael Rodriguez Bou forcefully stated: "We are using data and statistics from 1980. Up until now no government agency has bothered to carry out any recent studies which would indicate to us the true picture of the problem of illiteracy."

Dr. Rodriguez Bou, University Professor and author of a number of books on literacy continues to denounce government failures — techniques and plans which have hindered progress on the problem of illiteracy.

In continuation of the celebration of ILY the Puerto Rican Commission of Action on Literacy, the Literacy Programme of the Department of Education of Puerto Rico and the VISTA Literacy Programme will be carrying out various activities. Among these activities will be media presentations (radio, press and television), literacy forums, campaigns to recruit literacy tutors, and the formation of a network of Puerto Rican literacy organizations. Throughout the 1990s we will continue our "war on illiteracy in Puerto Rico."

For further information on literacy programmes and activities please contact: Sr. Gilberto Morales-Napoleoni, Presidente, Comisión Puertorriqueña de Acción Sobre Alfabetización, P.O. Box 1559, Guayama, Puerto Rico 00055.

BOOK VOYAGE

Many pages from countries/regions have been arriving daily into the ITFL Toronto Office. So far we have received decorative and creative pages written and drawn by literacy students from Europe, South Pacific, Thailand, Japan, Korea and Canada. Ones from the United States and the Caribbean will be arriving shortly.

Selected pages will be bound together into the Ceremonial Book which will be presented at the Book Voyage Closing Ceremony at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, on December 10, 1990 (International Human Rights Day).

Next year, a unique Global Book on Literacy will be published as a final outcome of the Book Voyage.

The Newest Adult Literacy Programme

Antigua has a population of 80,000 persons and boasts a literacy rate of over 90%. However, adult illiteracy has been a problem in Antigua for some time. The fact is that some of the older people never had a chance to benefit from the available primary education because they often had to be in the fields helping their parents. Now that secondary education is free for all, several young people, for various reasons, have not made proper or full use of it. Thus, in 1989 a group of concerned individuals, prompted by the head of the University of the West Indies' School of Continuing Studies, decided to form an organization to tackle the growing problems of adult illiteracy.

This group formed the Adult Literacy Programme in April 1989. This programme, which is a non-governmental organization affiliated to the U.W.I.'s School of Continuing Studies made the decision to go forward and start adult literacy classes by May 1990.

Note of Thanks

The ITFL would like to convey sincerest thanks to the Nissho Iwai Foundation in Japan for their very generous donation of US $7,050 and the Australian Association of Adult and Community Education for their generous donation of AUS$5,000, which will go towards the continued production of the ILY Newsletter.

This newsletter is partially funded by CIDA, SIDA and NORAD, National Literacy Secretariat, Canada

GREAT DEBATE

LITERACY AND LIBERATION

—An International Dialogue

Literacy is Not Liberation

Dr. Herbert Kohl, USA

Literacy is not liberation. If anything, it heightens one's consciousness of being oppressed and introduces a painful awareness of the contingency of oppression into previously resigned lives. Frederick Douglass, an ex-slave and one of the leaders of the Abolition movement before the United States' Civil War, described that state of consciousness in his autobiography:

> ...I would at times feel that learning to read had been a curse rather than a blessing. It had given me a view of my wretched condition, without the remedy. It opened my eyes to the horrible pit, but to no ladder upon which to get out. In moments of agony, I envied my fellow slaves for their stupidity. I have often wished myself a beast. I preferred the condition of the meanest reptile to my own. Anything, no matter what, to get rid of thinking!

It is essential that the literacy worker understand Douglass' point and not mistake freedom for the longing for freedom. The ability to understand one's oppression is a step beyond that oppression, but one that can as likely lead to suicide, mayhem and murder as to revolutionary activity. Douglass himself expressed this dilemma created by what he called the "silver trump of freedom (which) had aroused my soul to eternal wakefulness:"

> ...I often found myself regretting my own existence and wishing myself dead, and but for the hope of being free, I have no doubt but that I should have killed myself, or done something for which I should have been killed.

What saved Douglass, according to his own words, was the Abolitionist movement. He was able to connect with a collective struggle to eliminate slavery. If his personal discovery had taken place at a different historical moment, say a hundred years earlier, it's possible that Douglass would have killed himself, murdered his master or been killed in an unsuccessful slave rebellion.

Stirring up hope in the oppressed and

Continued on page 5

Response to "Literacy is Not Liberation"

Dr. Leslie Limage, Unesco, Paris, France

It would be difficult to argue with Kohl's conclusion. The possession of literacy cannot be considered synonymous with empowerment. The mastery of both reading and writing is, however, a key step towards empowerment. In fact, looked at historically, the transmission of one of the two skills — reading or writing — without the other has often been a device for further social control. Historians of literacy development have uncovered the intentional disassociation of the teaching of reading from that of writing so that, for example, in western Europe, a clear division of labour rose between those who wrote without understanding and those who read without being able to communicate their own thoughts.

What has history to do with 1990 International Literacy Year and with Kohl's argument? Currently more than 965 million adults (15 years of age and over) have no access to the written word. More than 130 million children of school age have never seen the inside of a classroom. Literacy or access to education is considered a basic human right but no country has completely eliminated illiteracy. Literacy for liberation has simply never been on national agendas except for limited periods in particular revolutionary contexts. Literacy workers who are already committed to some Freirean vision of their role as partisans continually ask themselves if they should be part of some of the "unholy alliances" which practicality

Continued on page 5

The Perils of Literacy and Other Thoughts

Dr. Raja Roy Singh, India/USA

Historically literacy, whether as oral or written, has been used as an instrument of power and domination. The denouncement of this historical process has come to a head in our century — the illiterate and the poor have been sorted out and they have turned out to be the same. Globally they are in the poor countries; within societies, they are the disposed poor. The coincidence of illiteracy with deprivation and dispossession is not fortuitous. Clearly there is something about literacy and the possibility of it spreading that seems too challenging, too unsettling by "stirring hope in the oppressed".

Those with power to silence who dread the effect of literacy on the dispossessed may be well founded in their fears. Literacy in this turbulent century has been associated in a very direct way with national struggles for freedom (Dr. Kohl cautions us to "not mistake freedom for the longing for freedom.") In all the great movements for national independence from colonial rule and its other manifestations in Asia, Africa and Latin America, the promotion of literacy was an essential and indispensable component of the peoples' mobilization.

"Literacy is not liberation. Literacy must be understood as a step towards empowerment, not empowerment itself." (Dr. Kohl). Both "liberation" and "empowerment" are complex human conditions in which no single grace, literacy or any other, can comprehend or account for the

Continued on page 5

Literacy and Freirean Philosophy

Dickson Mwanza, Zambia

Dr. Herbert Kohl seems to take the side of literacy for liberation while Dr. Limage seems to take literacy which suits diverse situations. One is much more suited for areas where systems have become oppressive and leave men and women with no other option but to fight back. Freirean philosophy in such situations is truly attractive. Freire does not deal in grey shades or colour but in black and white. One is either an oppressor or an oppressed and there is no middle ground. Realities of democracy hijacked by oligarchies or technocrats or political stone-throwers which are relevant in young nations in Africa, Asia and Latin America tend to compel social activists to choose "literacy which is for liberation". Literacy is a process of empowering but is not empowerment itself. There are economic and political realities to contend with. Yes, literacy can enhance people's ability to express themselves on issues created by inherent

Continued on page 6

RESEARCH

International Literacy Resource Centre

On September 7, 1990, the ICAE International Literacy Resource Centre, located at the ICAE Toronto offices, officially opened to the public. Over 50 people attended the Opening Reception to celebrate International Literacy Day including representatives of the academic, government, library, and grass roots communities.

The Resource Centre provides unique international materials on Literacy and other Adult Education issues to the Canadian community. Many of the materials found in the Resource Centre are produced by ICAE and ITFL member organizations involved in adult and non-formal education in over 90 countries.

The public hours of the Resource Centre are 2:00 - 5:30 pm, Monday - Thursday, with other hours by appointment. It is a reference collection only. There are photocopying facilities available.

For more information on the Resource Centre please call Sandy Iverson, Librarian at (416) 588-1211; fax (416) 588-5725.

Literacy and Power

Literacy and Power — The Latin American Battleground is a book about the impact of popular education and adult literacy programmes on the daily struggles of the people of Latin America. Writing from their own experience, the two authors, David Archer and Patrick Costello, describe some of the most exciting and innovative attempts to overcome the problem of widespread illiteracy. The programmes are diverse and controversial and often have to contend with severe opposition — in countries where the powerlessness of the poor is reinforced by lack of education.

The book is not only about literacy, it is also a guide to the problems of one of the world's most troubled regions. The book is available at a cost of 8.95 British pounds (which must be prepaid). A cheque or money order payable to EARTHSCAN PUBLICATIONS should be mailed to: Adrian Weston, Earthscan Publications Ltd., 3, Endsleigh Street, London WC1H 0DD England.

Literacy is Not Liberation *(Cont'd.)*
providing them with a tool, such as literacy, opens up the possibility of change but does not make the oppressor any less powerful. It does, however, create the possibility of direct confrontation between liberatory and repressive forces within a society. Paulo Freire learned this in Brazil and Chile, where at least temporarily, the repressive forces triumphed as the effects of his work began to be felt.

This poses the central question of literacy work: what is the responsibility of the literacy worker for participation in struggles that go beyond the literacy process itself? Can one "just" teach literacy or must one be partisan in the life struggles of the oppressed?

I believe that literacy work has to be seen as one part of a larger struggle for liberation, and commitment to that larger struggle is what gives literacy value. Reading for the sake of reading, understanding for the sake of intellectual clarity and critical awareness without critical action will not shake the world. This implies that literacy work cannot be safe work and that literacy must be understood as a step towards empowerment, not empowerment itself. ■

Response to "Literacy..." *(Cont'd.)*
suggests.

Political acceptability, renewed funding, mass media attention, partnerships with business or the voluntary sector — all frequently affect the availability of any form of literacy provision and certainly condition the nature of discourse about what it means to be literate or illiterate. Yet, in the broader picture of worldwide effort, it just doesn't appear constructive to deny goodwill where it is to be found with the argument that only the literacy programmes or workers committed "to struggles that go beyond the literacy process itself" should be encouraged.

I consider that literacy acquisition is a lifelong continuing process; that there is a continuum rather than a dichotomy, "literate/illiterate." If that view has validity, then there will be an unending need to improve and expand literacy provision. The point at which one person's literacy level contributes to her or his empowerment will differ from another's. Also,

Continued on page 6

The Perils of Literacy... *(Cont'd.)*
whole. However, put in active verb form, the statements hold true: literacy liberates, literacy empowers.

Literacy is what happens to the individual when, as a subject of his or her own knowing, he or she reaches out for new meanings, significance, interpretations. Literacy becomes an act of knowledge, not only of the words but of their meanings and of the social realities over which they draw a veil.

Don't we all as literacy workers remember the first time our adult pupils read out by themselves that familiar noble text (from their cultural history or their religious communion or the collective folk memory) and the sudden illumination of their faces in a new understanding, power and confidence?

It is in that sense that literacy liberates, literacy empowers.

Literacy by itself is not a liberation of the oppressed classes; it is neither a mantra of transcendence nor a call to the barricades; and it is not "suicide and mayhem". It is the "value added" in a human being's participation in streams of activities through which the social realities are modified or transformed, for example, participation in democratic processes, sensitivities to human rights, willingness to defend one's rights and freedom and just economic and social order.

It is in the above context that one might see Dr. Kohl's central question: what is the responsibility of the literacy worker for participation in struggles that go beyond literacy? The literacy worker, let it be said as a reminder, is not a "dispenser" of literacy action. He or she works with the learners who bring to the learning process their own insights, thus making the whole process a collective learning enterprise. Clearly the literacy worker's participate in the struggle. However let it be admitted, literacy work which helps human potential to unfold towards freedom is a loaded gun: it is not for the timid.

The profound anguish and despair of Frederick Douglass is not so much a literacy experience as it is a spiritual one. Literacy was but a small torch which showed him the whirling darkness of the pit and the darkness looked back.

"But where the danger is, grows
the saving power also." *(Holderline)* ■

ITFL ACTIVITIES

Toronto Office

- Preparation for the ITFL meeting in Bonn (the venue has been changed from Berlin to Bonn), Germany in Feb. 1991 is underway.
- The ITFL set up a small exhibit on literacy at the time of the official opening of the International Council for Adult Education, International Literacy Resource Centre on Sept. 7, 1990.
- Fundraising efforts around the Book Voyage and Newsletter are still underway.

International Task Force on Literacy, Coordinating
Office, c/o ICAE, 720 Bathurst Street, Ste. 500, Toronto,
Ontario Canada M5S 2R4, Telephone: (416) 588-1211
Fax: (416) 588-5725, Telex: 06-986766 TOR

South Asia/India Office

- Regular telecast of ITFL-sponsored two-minute filmlet on literacy by Doordarshan started Aug. 24, 1990.
- The Office sponsored a telecast on women and literacy by Delhi Doordarshan in August 1990.
- The Office organized the Learners Literacy Song Competition on Sept. 4, 1990. Twenty-five NGOs took part.
- International Literacy Day celebrations, including the launch of the ITFL South Asia Newsletter, took place on Sept. 8, 1990.

International Task Force on Literacy, South Asia/India
Office, c/o Indian Adult Education Association, 17-B Indraprastha Marg, New Delhi - 1100002 India, Tel: 331-9282
Cable: ADEO ASSO NEW DELHI, Fax: 35-33-18

USA: The Problem...*(Cont'd.)*

numbers. With the caller's permission this service will also send materials by mail, which include more local referrals within their city. Also with the caller's permission they contact the local programme and link them to the caller who is interested in either becoming a student or a volunteer. Materials are available in both English and Spanish. The free calling number is 1-800-228-8813 (within the US only).

Literacy Volunteers of America is one of the leading national literacy organizations in the US. They have approximately 400 programmes throughout the United States. The main components are basic reading and English as a Second Language studies (ESL). Their style is very individualized in that all materials are tailored to meet the personal needs of the student. Their address is: Literacy Volunteers of America, 5795 Widewater Parkway, Syracuse, N.Y. 13214.

Another leading organization which works both nationally and internationally in the field of literacy is Laubach Literacy International (LLI). LLI is located in Syracuse, New York and was founded in 1955 by literacy pioneer Frank C. Laubach. Its purpose is to enable illiterate adults and older youths to acquire listening, speaking, reading, writing and mathematics skills necessary to solve the problems one encounters in daily life, to take full advantage of opportunities in one's environment and to participate fully in the transformation of one's society. LLI manages a network which provides technical assistance and support in ten developing nations in Latin America, Africa and Asia.

Within the USA, LLI works through Laubach Literacy Action (LLA) and New Readers Press (NRP). LLA works with local programmes in 45 states and provides technical assistance to literacy programmes in libraries, prisons and adult basic education centres. NRP publishes English language instructional materials for adults and older youths with limited reading skills; tutor training materials and teacher resources.

Laubach will provide free newsletters, brochures and pamphlets on all their programmes within the US and around the world by writing to: Laubach Literacy International, 1320 Jamesville Ave., Box 131, Syracuse, N.Y. 1321.

Other major international organizations working in the field of literacy which are based in the USA are: Baha'i International Community, 866 UN Plaza, Suite 120, New York, N.Y. 10017; International Reading Association, 800 Parksdale Rd., P.O. Box 8139, Newark, Delaware 19714-8139; World Education Inc., 210 Lincoln St., Suite 500, Boston, Massachusetts 02111. These are all member organizations. ■

Freirean Philosophy *(Cont'd.)*

oppressive systems.

Dr. Limage's ideas fit squarely into the liberal mode that characterizes thinking in other and western democracies. The semblance of self expression that exists does not make literacy look like a powerful weapon for social change. Again offerings of literacy knowledge in older western democracies are individualized and if anything they tend to divide one person from another. The underlying philosophy behind such an approach is one of individualism rather than collectivism. The high standard of living, the celebrated spread and upholding and democratic ideals that characterize the West tend to gloss over or hide the marginalization of certain people and it looks and sounds like madness when one talks of literacy programmes or workers committed to struggles that go beyond the literacy process itself." It is undeniable that a lot of good will for literacy comes from diverse sources. Workplace literacy is an admirable and commendable effort. Yes, with all good intentions workplace literacy does produce efficient workers for industry but does not free them. It shackles them to industry.

Both statements by Dr Limage and Dr. Kohl have relevant social contexts to which they are applied. That is why in certain contexts one finds Laubach Literacy International's "Each One Teach One" method confusing while in others they work quite well.

Dr. Freire's philosophy is quite attractive to social activists both in developing and developed worlds, while organizations and individuals seeking continuity of status quo see it as poison and don't talk about it. ■

Response to "Literacy..."*(Cont'd.)*

teachers of adults and children long ago made the discovery that there is no single approach to the teaching of reading and writing which suits everyone. Hence it seems overly optimistic to hope that all literacy workers will be motivated by the same goals or that all learners will seek literacy for the same purposes. It would seem much more useful as we approach the 21st century to ensure that the possibility to learn is made universally available. Literacy may not be liberation but it does matter and matters greatly. ■